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THE WORKS

OF

JOHN HOWE, M.A.

THE WORKS

OF

JOHN HOWE, M.A.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXON.

VOLUME VI.

FUNERAL SERMONS:

SPADEMAN'S "FUNERAL SERMON FOR JOHN HOWE, M.A.:"

INDEX.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

On completing the last volume of this new edition of all the works which Howe himself published, I am happy to say that, with the exception of two or three minor pieces, I have been enabled to carry out my purpose of collating the text of Calamy with that of editions issued in Howe's life-time, and of correcting the former by the latter. The two or three tracts, of which I was unable to obtain copies in the original editions at the time when they were wanted, I could not have procured without inconveniently delaying the press. Of one of these—the "Letter concerning Stillingfleet's Sermon"—I have since seen a copy through the kindness of the Rev. Mr. Turner, of Knutsford, and have collated it with the present text, to see if there were any variations in Calamy sufficiently important to be noticed here. I am glad to say that though, as usual, there are some minute verbal deviations in Calamy, there are none of them such as to affect the sense.

In many of the more difficult of Howe's treatises, especially those on more abstruse subjects,—as for example, the 'Trinity,'—I have detected several material errors in Calamy's text; and flatter myself, that by their correction, as well as by the change of punctuation, those pieces will be found more intelligible by the reader.

Of a large portion of the contents of this last volume, which consists wholly of "Funeral Sermons,"—by no means the least valuable of Howe's writings,—I was at one time afraid that I must relinquish the hope of obtaining anything beyond the text of Calamy, as copies, in the original editions, had in many instances become exceedingly scarce. I in vain sought for them in those public libraries where it might have been thought they were pretty certain to be found, and in the stores of the largest booksellers. Having mentioned the difficulty to my friend the Rev. Dr. Halley, he bethought him that another friend, Joshua Wilson, Esq., of Tunbridge Wells, well known for his extensive knowledge of this department of literature, very probably possessed the Sermons in question, and he kindly applied to him on my behalf. Mr. Wilson with his customary liberality immediately supplied me with all that I needed, and to his courtesy I owe it that I have been able to carry out, to the end, my original plan in editing this new edition of Howe.

Four or five minute errata in addition to the few given at the commencement of the first volume have been pointed out by Mr. J. E. Ryland, of Northampton, and the Rev. Mr. Hole, of Alford, for whose friendly communications I beg to return my thanks; the corrections will be found at the close of the present volume.

I have also to offer my thanks to Mr. Macray, Magdalen College, Oxford, and the Rev. R. Machray, Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, for having kindly procured and transmitted to me the copy of an original letter of Howe's, transcribed from a volume of MSS. in the Bodleian. As it came too late to be inserted with the other letters, in the Memoir, it has been printed at the close of the "Sermons" in this volume.

A DISCOURSE

RELATING TO THE

EXPECTATION OF FUTURE BLESSEDNESS.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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A DISCOURSE RELATING TO THE EXPECTATION OF FUTURE BLESSEDNESS.

HEBREWS x. 36.

"FOR YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE, THAT, AFTER YE HAVE DONE THE WILL OF GOD, YE MIGHT RECEIVE THE PROMISE."

It is evident the Creator of this lower world never intended it to be the perpetual dwelling-place of its inhabitants, if man had continued innocent. Inasmuch as sin and death, by inseparable connexion, entered together,—had sin never entered, death would never have had place here: and whereas, by the blessing of God, multitudes had been continually born into this world, and none had ever died out of it; by consequence it must have been, in time, so over-peopled as not to contain its inhabitants.

Whereupon, man having been created in a state of probation—as his fall showed—and a candidate for a better state in some nobler region, the time of probation being over, (the limits whereof, considering the sad event that soon ensued, it was to no purpose for us to know, nor consequently for God to reveal,) it could not be but that nature itself, being, in every one, pure and genuine, must prompt him to continual aspirings towards the highest perfection whereof, by the Divine will, he should find himself capable; though

yet it could not consist with the sinlessness of his present state to be over-hasty. But the conscience of his being a debtor for all his present attainments to the freest and most munificent bounty, must oblige him to a dutiful compliance with the wise and sovereign pleasure of his blessed Lord; to a cheerful contentation and willingness, that He should make what further use of him He should see fit, for transmitting a holy life and nature, to such as should come after him; and to a most calm, serene, and pleasant expectation of being seasonably translated higher.

But now sin and death having invaded this world and spread through it, into how horrid a gulf have they turned this part of God's creation! Men having by their own apostasy cut themselves off from God, do each of them grasp at Deity; every one attempts to fill up His room, and is so profanely insolent as to affect being a God to himself,—his own first and last. And all having withdrawn themselves from God and abandoned his interest, which the law of their creation and their dependent state obliged them to serve, they have no common interest left; whereupon every one makes his own, his only interest. And that sovereign principle of Divine love being extinct, whereby they were to "love God with all their hearts, souls, minds, and might," which is the first and great command; the second branch, like the former, by which they were all, for His sake, to love each other as himself, naturally fails and dies: whence every one sets up himself, in exclusion to God, and all other men. And that self, (all concern for their better and nobler part, which could only have its support and satisfaction in God, being suppressed and lost,) is only their baser, their carnal self. It is this alone they are concerned for. And every one seeks to catch and engross all that he can for the service and gratification of this vile, sensual self, out of this sensible world; which, because it is all empty vanity, and hath not enough in it to satiate so enormous and ungoverned an appetite, this makes them tear this world in pieces,—every one snatching what he can of it for himself.

Hence are "wars and fightings."[1] And as by this friendship every one seeks to contract with this world separately and alone, so as to engross it to himself apart from other men, they make themselves enemies to God; so they become devils to one another. And thus are men generally drowned in perdition and destruction.

But the merciful God hath appointed his own Son a Redeemer for us, "who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us"—*to take us out from*,[2] as the word signifies—"this present evil world;" whose first law, and most deeply fundamental to the whole Christian state, as the case before stated required, is that of *self-denial;* which, so far as it obtains, doth truly restore us to ourselves, and to our first and primitive state and place in God's creation. For having suffered once for us, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,"[3] and having "redeemed us to God by his blood,"[4] when he shall have obtained this his end upon us, all things fall right with us as to him, ourselves, and one another.

Yet because the wise and God-becoming methods, which are used in pursuance of the Redeemer's design, do not generally take place or prevail against the spirit of this world; but men, through their own wicked inclination, obstinately adhere to this world, seeking their all from it; and the usurping "god of this world blinding their minds, that the glorious light of the gospel of Christ should not shine unto them,"[5] and being an "inworking spirit in the children of disobedience,"[6] "leading them captive at his will;"[7] and that this prince of the darkness of this world, made up of malice and envy against God and of malignity and mischief against men, as their common Apollyon and destroyer, doth with all his legions haunt and infest this lower world, till the time of their torment come; and that thus enmity against God and his Christ is fomented, and naturally propagated from age to age in this world:—it is therefore

[1] James iv. 1, 4. [2] Gal. i. 4. [3] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [4] Rev. v. 9.
[5] 2 Cor. iv. 4. [6] Eph. ii. 2. [7] 2 Tim. ii. 26.

God's righteous and declared pleasure, to put an end to this state of things; not to continue this world, as the stage of his perpetuated dishonours; but to shut it up by the final judgment, and at last consume it with fire. In the meantime, while he is gradually "consuming sinners out of this earth," he is by equal degrees gathering home his own out of it. And to them, how great a privilege is it to be taken out "from this present evil world!"

Which that they may apprehend with savour and relish, their blessed Lord hath let them have a foresight of "death abolished," and of "life and immortality brought to light in his gospel," and gives them the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that they may know "the hope of their calling,"[1]—endowing them with that "faith, which is the substance of the things" they hope for.[2]

Whereupon, having all the glories of the other world in view, and the representation of a state which they have reason to apprehend as much more blissful and glorious than, in the way of even primitive nature, they could have attained to,—in proportion as the second Adam doth excel the first in dignity, performances, and glory,—here, therefore, their "need of patience," in expecting this final issue of things to themselves in particular, and to the whole redeemed community, is most conspicuous; and appears great even as it relates to this expectation, though they did not labour under the pressure of very grievous evils besides,—which yet must much increase that need.

But it is this expectation itself to which I intend principally to confine the present discourse. In reference whereunto, the greater the pleasure is of our foresight, the greater need we shall have of this patience; that is, as our foresight,—though beholding the terrible things, death and the final dissolution of all things, which must intervene,—doth yet terminate on the blessed consequents thereof.

And those consequents, namely, the enjoyments and

[1] Eph. i. 17, 18. [2] Heb. xi. 1.

blessedness of the future state, it is plain the apostle did intend in these words, as the context evidently shows; that is, whether you consider the foregoing or the following context. For that "great recompence of reward," mentioned in the immediately foregoing verse,[1] and the "salvation of our souls," in the close of this chapter; and the "things hoped for" and not "seen," in the very beginning of the next, do plainly show,—the discourse being of a piece,—that the "promise" to be received must be the promise of that blessedness that is not to be enjoyed, in the fulness of it, but by intervening death; nor by all holy men together, till the end of all things.[2] And whereas we have here the expression of 'receiving the promise,' it is plain the promise must be understood objectively, that is, that transcendent good that was promised; namely, that principally, wherein all the promises do finally and lastly centre: which it is plain, the apostle here most especially intends, as being *eminently* called "the promise." Whereupon

There are now two things that offer themselves to our observation from this Scripture.

First, That the business of a sincere Christian in this world is to be doing the will of God. Secondly, That patience, in expecting the consequent blessedness of the future state, is a needful requisite in every sincere and thorough Christian.

The former of these I shall not insist upon, but only touch transiently.

I need not tell you that, by the will of God, we are to understand the *object* of his will or that which he wills, namely, the thing willed; not his will itself, which is not a thing yet to be done, but eternal, as his own very being itself: and again, that you may easily apprehend it is our *duty* willed by him, and not mere events, that must be understood to be the object of this will,—namely, wherein we have a part to act; otherwise how are we said to do his will?

Of this every sincere Christian must be the active instru-

[1] Ver. 35. [2] Chap. xi. 13.

ment. All creatures, whether they will or no, whether they design any such thing or design it not, must be the passive subjects upon which his will takes place. But to be the active instrument thereof, is in fact the business only of a devoted person, one given up to God in Christ. Such only are in an immediate capacity or promptitude to do the will of God, intentionally and with their own design; though it be the undoubted duty of all, who are naturally capable thereof.

Will this rebel world never consider this,—that are in a continual war with him in whose hands is their breath, on this high point, Whose will shall be supreme? and dread not the issue of so unequal a combat between Omnipotence and an earthen potsherd? nor bethink themselves what woes impend and hang over their guilty heads, for so mad insolence as "striving with their Maker?"[1]

Will they never consider it, that pretend subjection to him, when their very pretence is a mockery? and that affront him with the frequent repetition of that ludicrous petition, "Thy will be done on earth," amidst their open, contemptuous oppositions thereto?

Secondly, But I shall apply myself to consider the latter of these: That patience, in the expectation of the blessedness of the heavenly estate, is very needful to every sincere and thorough Christian.

And in speaking to this, I shall, I. Give some account of this patience according as it is to have this exercise,—in expecting future blessedness. II. Labour to evince to you the necessity of it; how needful a thing it is to any serious and thorough Christian: and so the *use* will ensue.

I. I shall give some account of this patience, as it is to be exercised in the present case.

We might, indeed, assign a third occasion of exercising patience, besides suffering present incumbent evils and expect-

[1] Isaiah xlv. 9.

ing a future hoped good; namely, doing the good which belongs to the duty of our present state; which the text points out to us in what it interposes,—"after ye have done the will of God;" and which is intimated, when we are charged not "to be weary in well-doing,"[1] and, "by a patient continuance in well-doing, to seek honour, glory, and immortality,"[2] etc., and "to run with patience the race set before us;"[3] when also "the good ground" is said "to bring forth with patience."[4] But considering *that* the pleasure which doing good contains in itself, and that the patience it gives occasion for, is accidental, and arises from the other two, either the sufferings to which doing good often exposes, or the expectation of a greater good in a perfect state,—when also all indisposition and lassitude shall perfectly cease,—we need not make this a distinct head: or however, our present design confines us, chiefly, to the patience that is to be exercised in the expectation of our final good, namely, blessedness.

And in speaking hereto, I shall—1. Lay down some things more generally; and, 2. Thence proceed to what will more particularly concern the matter in hand.

1. There are some things more generally to be considered, which, though more remotely, will aptly serve our purpose.

i. That the natural constitution of the human soul disposeth it equally to covet and pursue a desirable good, as to regret and shun a hurtful evil. This is plain to any that understand their own natures, and take any notice of the most connatural motions and operations of their inward man.

ii. That the want of such a desirable and suitable good, understood to be so, is as truly afflicting and grievous as the pressure of a present evil.

iii. That an ability to bear that want is as real and needful an endowment, as the fortitude by which we endure a painful evil.

Yea, and it may be as sensibly painful—the pain of thirst

[1] Gal. vi. 9. [2] Rom. ii. 7. [3] Heb. xii. 1. [4] Luke viii. 15.

being as grievous as that of a wound or bruise. Therefore the ability to bear it without despondency, or any perturbation or discomposure of spirit, call it by what name you will, is a most desirable advantage and benefit to any man.

iv. That, therefore, it equally belongs to patience, to be exercised in the one case as well as in the other. And the general nature of it being found in each, as we shall further see hereafter, the name is with equal fitness common to both, and to be given alike to either of them. For what do names serve for, but to express the natures of things as near as we can?

These generals being thus premised, I shall

2. Proceed more distinctly to give account of patience according to this notion of it, by showing what it supposes—wherein it consists. i. What it supposes, as it hath its exercise this way, namely, in the expectation of the blessedness of the future state. ii. Wherein, so considered, it consists.

i. What, thus taken, it supposes. First—

That blessedness, truly so called, be actually understood and apprehended by the expectants as a real and most desirable good to them. They can, otherwise, never think themselves to need patience in expecting it.

To the blind befooled world, true blessedness is a frightful thing. They run from it as a *mormo*, or some terrible appearance. Religion, that is, nearness to God and inward conversation with him, (which we will not say hath *affinity* with it, but contains it or is the same thing,) they dread as a formidable darkness, or the shadow of death. Therefore they say to God, "Depart from us." Whereupon it is not the want of this blessedness, but the thing itself, so monstrously misunderstood, that gives exercise to their patience; nor have they patience enough for it. The Divine presence they cannot endure. Secondly,

The delays and deferring of this blessedness must be an afflicting and felt grievance: otherwise patience can have no place or exercise about it. Paganish morality hath taught

us,[1] *Nulla est virtus quæ non sentis perpeti;* 'It is no virtue at all to bear that which I do not feel.' A stone, if it bears the most heavy weight, yet feels it not: 'and,' saith that instructive writer, 'we ascribe not to the virtuous man the hardness of a stone.' If I have no feeling of a grievance in the deferred blessedness of the future state, I have no use for patience in expecting it. "Hope deferred," saith one divinely wise, "makes the heart sick." There will be a sickness at the heart, by the delay of what I hope for; most of all, when the sum of my blessedness is the thing hoped for, and still deferred. The delay must be as grievous as the attainment is pre-apprehended to be pleasant and joyous; namely, that, when it comes, it is a "tree of life:" so the gratefulness of enjoyment is, in the opposite sentence,[2] set against the heart-sickness of expectation. They that never felt their hearts sick with the desire of heaven and the blessedness of that state, cannot conceive of it a "tree of life" beforehand, nor ever know what 'patience in expecting it' signifies in the meantime.

These things being supposed unto this patience, we next come to show,

ii. Wherein it consists: and are here to consider that its more special nature cannot be understood, without taking some previous short notice of its general nature, or what it hath in it common to it with other patience under the same name.

Its more general notion seems not capable of any fitter expression, than 'an ability becomingly to endure.'

But because that may be without or with reference to God; this latter we are to single out, for the subject of our present discourse, as that which the text expressly intends: "Ye have need of patience, that, *after ye have done the will of God*, ye may receive the promise."

And its reference to God may be twofold; namely, both as he is the Author and object of it.

[1] Seneca. [2] Prov. xiii. 12.

As he is the *Author:* inasmuch as it is a most useful principle and disposition of soul, which, with a compassionate regard to the exigency of our present state, God is pleased to implant in such as he hath a favour for; that they may not be exposed as a vessel in a wide and stormy sea, unable otherwise to endure, and under a necessity of sinking or of being broken in pieces. In their make and frame, they are fitted to their state, even by gracious vouchsafement: and therefore is this fitly reckoned a divine grace. We find it placed among the "fruits of the Spirit;"[1] and are therefore to count it, as that is the Spirit of grace, a most needful and excellent grace of that blessed Spirit; by which, duly exercised, the soul is composed unto a right temper, not only in bearing the evils of this present state, but in waiting for the blessedness of the future.

And thus we consider it as not only a rational temperament, that may, in great part, take its rise from ourselves and the sober use of our own thoughts—which yet it unbecomes us not to employ to this purpose—but also as a gratuitous donation, a gift of the good Spirit of God. And hereof there is a not obscure intimation in the text, telling us we have *need* of patience. It is grace, or merciful vouchsafement, that considers what we do need: whence, therefore, we hear of a "throne of grace," whither we are to come for "mercy, and grace to help in time of need."[2]

And, as such, how fitly is its nature signified in the mentioned place by the word *μακροθυμία,* 'longanimity;' which we read, less properly, 'long-suffering;' there being no notion of 'suffering' in the word; taking also *θυμός,* or 'animus,' in present composition, as not only signifying mind, as that denotes the understanding faculty or mere intellect; but lively desire, a certain vigour and strength of spirit, zeal, hope, courage, fortitude, an unaptness to a yielding succumbency; and this —as the other word signifies—through a long space or tract of time; when desire and hope are lengthened and continued

[1] Gal. v. 22. [2] Heb. iv. 16.

without despondency, even to the appointed term, and during the prescribed season, of expectation. And so the word doth rather incline to express patience, as it refers unto a desired good that we are expecting and waiting for. And you find it mentioned with other graces,[1] by the word in the text, *ὑπομονή*, which is equally apt to express a permanent waiting, or expectation of good, as suffering of incumbent evil. But also, if we consider that context, we there may discern its heavenly descent, and its being a part of the offspring of God among men. For immediately, upon the mention of a "Divine nature" participated—or a godly frame and habit of soul—that carries a man up, or enables him to emerge and escape the pollutions of this impure world; besides this *escape* are to be added, not without our own intervening diligence, the several following gracious principles, as branches, into which that Divine nature shoots forth, exerts, and spreads itself; of which this patience is one.

And, to show its Divine original, God is pleased to style himself in his Word, "the God of patience."[2] It is his very image in the soul. For is not the Divine patience one of the great attributes, by which we are to know him? and for which we are to adore him? It is that,—by which he suffers not *hurt*, whereof the Divine Being is not capable, but,—by which he bears *much wrong* from his injurious, revolted creatures. Whence it is a mighty power, that is said to lie in the Divine patience. "Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, The Lord is long-suffering," etc.[3] It is, indeed, his power over himself; by which he restrains his anger, his omnipotent anger, that would otherwise go forth to consume offending creatures. We cannot indeed conceive any such passion in God which he finds a difficulty in restraining, though, speaking to men, he uses their language, and bespeaks them in their own idioms and forms of speech: but it is owing to the necessary, self-

[1] 2 Pet. i. 5, 6.

[2] Rom. xv. 5.

[3] Numb. xiv. 17, 18.

originate concurrence of all perfections in his nature and being, that nothing unbecoming deity can have place there.

In the meantime, since the new creature is godlike, the image of God, we hence are taught to conceive of patience—a part of that production—not under the notion of dull and sluggish impotency, but of power, an ability to endure, as before; and *that*, as having its original and pattern in the blessed God himself.

And it is also specified by a respect to God as the *object*. For a deference to his holy pleasure in ordering the occasions of such exercise, is carried in the notion of it. It hath in it submission to the will of God. And by this it comes to be taken into religion, or religion must be taken into *it*, and be comprehended in our conception of it. True and gracious patience, and every exercise of it, is to be looked upon as a part of piety and godliness.

We are here not to suppose that *patience*, in expecting good and in bearing evils, must have distinct notions, but exercises only. And, though these exercises are distinct, yet as the suffering of many incumbent evils is in our present state complicated with the absence and expectation of the good we desire, these exercises are scarce ever to be separated. It is, therefore, the less to surprise us, that this ingredient into the nature of patience—submission to God—should run into both, as we find a mixture in the occasions thereof: as when the psalmist complains of them that "breathed cruelty against him," he says, "he had fainted," (as *we* translate,—for those words 'I had fainted' are not in the Hebrew text, but concealed in a more emphatical *aposiopesis;* as much as to say, 'it cannot be expressed, how deplorable my case had been, if I had not believed), "to see the goodness of the Lord." And adds, "wait on the Lord, he shall strengthen thine heart," [1] etc.

This, in the meantime, is the voice of patience,—'It is the Lord:' and, in the present case, it is he that disposes and

[1] Ps. xxvii. 13, 14.

orders I should so long bear and wait; that overawes my soul, and brings it down to a peaceful and dutiful acquiescence in his good pleasure; peaceful to myself, dutiful towards him. "Let him do what seemeth him good." Since it is his pleasure, that I should wait so long before I shall become a blessed creature, I shall admire and praise him, that I hope I shall be so at last: but, with profound submission unto his purpose and determination herein, wait, till he shall think fit to fulfil this good pleasure of his goodness towards me, in accomplishing my desires and in answering my expectations fully at last; when I shall be brought into that state where "is fulness of joy;" and be placed "at thy right hand, O Lord, where are rivers of pleasure for evermore!" The thing is wholly from him, and it is fit the time should be also.

And now, as true patience hath belonging to it what is so special; namely, a respect to God, which we understand to be causal of it, in its proper kind; so we may give a further short account of it, considering it,—

In its peculiar *effect*, or, (as it is called,[1]) the "work of patience;" namely, that it gives a man a mastery and conquest over all undue and disorderly passions. It fixes the soul in a composed serenity, creates it a region of sedate and peaceful rest; infers into it a silent calm, allays or prevents all turbulent agitations; excludes whatsoever of noisy clamour; permits no tumults, no storm or tempest *within*,—whatsoever of that kind, in this our expecting state, may beset a man from *without*.

And this most connatural effect of patience, we see how most aptly it is expressed by our Saviour:[2] "In your patience possess ye your souls;" as much as to say, it is patience that must give a man the *dominium sui;* and keep him, under God, 'in his own power.' He intimates, if you have not patience, you are outed of yourselves; you are no longer masters of your own souls; can have no enjoyment of

[1] James i. 4. [2] Luke xxi. 19.

yourselves; and, therefore, are much less to expect a satisfying enjoyment of him.

The temper of spirit it introduces, in opposition to angry and querulous repinings, is a dutiful silence; "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth; because thou didst it:"[1] in opposition to fear, it is fortitude; "wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord:"[2] in opposition to a despairing dejection of mind, confidence; as in this context, "cast not away your confidence, you have need of patience:" in opposition to immoderate sorrow for your deferred felicity, complacency; "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."[3] As much as to say, O blessed be God for our prospect! and that we have a firm ground whereupon to live, "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God."[4]

It is that by which, with this composure of soul, we expect and are still looking for the "blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"[5] knowing, that "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."[6] For then it is that our blessedness is complete, *when he shall appear the second time*. Then all those many things concur, that are requisite to the making the work of our salvation most *perfect* and *consummate* work; and patience is to have its "perfect work," in commensuration thereto.

But while we are present in these earthly bodies, "we are absent from the Lord;" and many things are wanting to the happiness we expect. This is the patience we are to exercise in the meantime.

We may thus shortly sum up the matter; namely, that in reference to the delay of the blessedness we expect, first, we

[1] Ps. xxxix. 9. [2] Ps. xxvii. 14. [3] Col. i. 11, 12. [4] Rom. v. 2.
[5] Titus ii. 13. [6] Heb. ix. 28.

ought not to be without sense, as if it were no grievance; that were stupidity, and not patience. And, secondly, that we ought not to have an excessive sense of it, which were mere peevishness, and impatience.

Therefore having given this account, what this patience, considered in this exercise, imports; I come

II. To show the necessity of it, in a serious and thorough Christian, from the consideration of the *principles* from whence this necessity arises—and the *ends* which it is necessary unto.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that the form of speech here used in the Greek, χρείαν ἔχειν, doth directly lead us to consider the latter of these; *usefulness* to such or such purposes rather than the intrinsical necessity of a thing in itself.

But it cannot be denied that, to make a man a complete Christian, must be taken in as a primary and fundamental part, the use of patience, subservient to all the rest. And we find it recommended upon this account: "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing."[1] Therefore, what shows its necessity, as belonging to the inward frame and constitution of a Christian, cannot be irrelative to our purpose. And this appears from its intimate connexion with several things, that most confessedly belong, as principles, to the most inward frame and constitution of a Christian.

1. The principles we shall here refer to are either subordinate, or sovereign and supreme; and they both make it necessary, and produce it.

Those that are subordinate concur in the constitution of a truly Christian frame, and thereupon both make this exercise of patience necessary, and existent; or make way for it, that it may obtain and take place with them in a man's soul. They are such as these.

i. Faith of the unseen state; that faith, which, in this

[1] James i. 4.

very context, the beginning of the next chapter, is called the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." This faith of a Christian tells him, God hath made report to me of the glory and blessedness of the unseen world; and I believe it, take his word, rely upon it. I do, as the apostle says, "hope for eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised."[1] This realizes the things themselves, makes them that are future as present. It serves me instead of eyes, and present sense. They are things in reference whereto we must walk by faith, and not by sight. That faith makes a supply for vision, as we find it did, in reference to an unseen Christ.[2] One great part of the expected blessedness of the other state, is that beatific sight of him which we shall have; and which, believed and hoped for, maintains present life and vigour in us towards him. Though we have not had the privilege of seeing him "in the flesh," as divers had in time past; yet, "not having so seen, we love him;" and, for that other sight of him in glory, how far off that may be in time to come, we know not. But though so, too, we now or as yet "see him not, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."[3] If I do, with my whole heart and soul, believe God telling me that thus it shall be, this faith will operate to this height, a glorious joy; much more to this depth, a soul-composing patience. Therefore are these two, faith and patience, so often paired and put together in Scripture; and particularly, with reference to this expectation of "inheriting the promises."[4] And how plainly is the affinity and near alliance of these two signified,[5] where the apostle, exhorting to the patience of expectants, saith, 'Be patient, brethren, behold the husbandman waiteth,—be you also patient';—*he* subjoins the proposal of the great object of their faith, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." It is the faith of the unseen state (which commences, to the whole Christian

[1] Tit. i. 2. [2] 1 Pet. i. 8. [3] 1 Pet. i. 8.
[4] Heb. vi. 12. [5] James v. 7, 8.

community, at their Lord's coming) that makes patience at once both necessary and possible, yea, and actual too; necessary, because the prospect it gives is so glorious; possible, because it is so sure. Upon the former account, without patience the delay could not be endured; upon the latter, because it affords continual relief and strength, that one may be capable of enduring, and actually endure. We more easily bear the delay of the most excellent things, whereof we are sure at last. Out of the very eater itself, comes forth meat, and sweetness.

ii. Nor shall we unfitly add hope to faith. We learn them to be distinguishable, finding them distinctly mentioned as two of that great triad of principles, said "to abide;"[1] nor shall be at a loss how to distinguish them, if we consider faith as more directly respecting the ground upon which we rest, the Divine testimony or revelation; hope, the object unto which we thereupon reach forward in desire and expectation. And, as we see how this latter is complicated with faith, so we may see how it connects with patience; "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen, is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."[2]

And, if we follow the thread of discourse through this context, and observe how it begins, "We are saved by hope;" and how it terminates *in patience*, it is obvious to collect that were it not for patience, we were lost! and may so learn how further to understand our Saviour's words: "In your patience, possess ye your own souls;"[3] namely, as *possessing* or *keeping* stands opposed to *losing*. They that cannot "endure to the end, cannot be saved." So is the new creature composed by a contexture of principles, to be, under God, a self-preserving thing!

iii. Love is another great constituent of the Christian frame as such, that makes patience necessary; as much patience is

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 13. [2] Rom. viii. 24, 25. [3] Luke xxi. 19.

requisite to make *them* endure one another's absence, who are very cordial lovers of one another. Nothing is more essential in the constitution of a sincere Christian, than Divine love. It is the very heart and soul of the new creature: love desiring after God, as my supreme good; love delighting and acquiescing in him above all, according to my present measure of enjoyment of him; which being very imperfect, makes my patience most absolutely necessary, till it can be perfect. If I have not patience, how can I endure the absence of him whom I love better than myself? And that love of him doth connote, and carry along with it, the extinction of the love of this present world, so that it shall not longer be predominant; its predominancy being inconsistent with the love of God. "Love not the world—if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."[1] Now when a soul is mortified to the love of this world, it is not hereby quite stupified; love is not destroyed, but turned to another and its more proper object; and is so much the more intense Godward, by how much the more it is drawn and taken off from all inferior things. Thereupon it must be so much the more grievous to be kept off from him; and that grievance cannot be borne without patience. For that which aggrieves is the absence of my best good, which can have no equivalent; and the want whereof nothing can supply or fill up its room. God cannot be loved without being known; nor can he be known to be God, but as the best good. Though I can never know him perfectly, yet so much I must be supposed to know of him, that he is better than all things else; that nothing that is not superior in goodness to all things besides, even infinitely superior, can be God; and nothing but such an uncreated good can make me a happy creature. And what patience do I need, to make me content not to be happy!

But he were not such a good, goodness itself, if he could impose it upon me to choose to be miserable, or never to be happy. He only requires that I wait awhile, that I be patient

[1] 1 John ii. 15.

of some delay: and hereupon, if my love be such as it ought, it doth not only make patience necessary, but facile too. It corresponds not to its glorious and most excellent object, if it be not a very reverential and most obsequious love, full of duty towards him on whom it is placed; if it hath not in it a regard to the blessed God, as well under the notion of the sovereign Ruler as the sovereign good.

And thereupon my patience, as hath been said, carrying religion in it,—that is, a dutiful disposition towards God,—the same principle which makes it necessary, makes it practicable also. When he, whose devoted servant I am, hath signified to me his good pleasure; namely, *that* he finally intends me to a blessed state, but that in the state wherein I now am, he hath present service for me to do; or that he sees it requisite before he translates me out of this state, further to prepare me for a better, and requires in the meantime I seek "honour, glory, and immortality, by a patient continuance in well-doing;"—my love to him itself, which makes it to appear necessary, makes it also appear to me the most reasonable thing in all the world; and that my heart say within me,—even from the power and spirit of Divine love,—when he imposes this expectation, though tedious, and when he inflicts *anything* grievous: "I was dumb, O Lord, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it,"[1] though I could not have taken it from another. We further add, not as a single, but more comprehensive principle,

iv. Holiness; which, impressed upon the soul, suits it unto the heavenly state, and so makes it covet it more earnestly. All things naturally tend to the perfection of that state unto which they are predisposed, which is more congenerous to them, or whereto they have an agreement in their natures. It is so in the new nature, as well as that which is common to other creatures. All things naturally tend to their like. It cannot be less thus with the new creature, whose nature is improved, heightened, and perfected beyond that of other creatures. It

[1] Ps. xxxix. 8.

is the Divine holiness impressed upon the soul, that suits it unto the participation of the heavenly inheritance. None ever come to heaven, but they that are made "meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light."[1] They that are made meet for heaven, suited in the temper of their spirits to it, cannot but long for it and do therefore need patience, while they are waiting. It is indeed but that to which they are begotten. Holiness in general is the product of regeneration. And we find, that we are said to be begotten unto the "lively hope."[2] Hope must be taken there objectively by what follows,—"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."[3] A disposition to it is in our very *natalitia*. We are "begotten to it" by the implantation of this principle of the new, divine, and heavenly birth. Such are born for that country,—born with a suitableness to that inheritance,—therefore cannot but have earnest longings after it; and therefore cannot but need patience, that they may endure the delay. And that also connotes and carries with it these two things,—

Hatred of the opposite, and a tendency unto the improvement and perfection of itself.

(1.) Hatred of the opposite,—sin. And this makes a serious Christian groan,—'I have a body of death hanging about me. I cannot get rid of the impurities which I hate.' And because the very habit of their soul is now so far changed, that they are made holy, they cannot but hate the contrary: "You that love the Lord hate evil;"[4] it belongs to your character to do so. And they know, that they shall never be quite rid of it, as long as they are here. And though, as sin is an evil against God, it is not to be the object of their patience; yet, as it is a grievance to themselves, the remainders of it are so far to be the object about which their patience may be exercised, that they are not to enter into any quarrel that he doth not immediately make them perfect in the very first moment of their conversion.

[1] Col. i. 12. [2] 1 Pet. i. 3. [3] Verse 4. [4] Ps. xcvii. 10.

And as there is conjunct with this frame of holiness, hatred of the opposite, so there is—

(2.) A tendency to the improving and heightening itself: for everything naturally affects its own perfection, or the perfection of its own proper kind. As nature, in everything that grows, aims at a certain pitch, at a certain ἀκμή; so where there is an inchoate holiness, there cannot but be a tendency unto consummate perfect holiness. The precept, therefore, agrees to the temper of their mind to whom it is given: "perfecting holiness, in the fear of God."[1] This is having the "law written in our heart," and "put into the inward part."

But, as holiness includes conformity to the preceptive will of God, so it doth to his disposing will, being made known. Therefore when we understand it to be his pleasure we should wait, the holy nature itself, which prompts us so earnestly to desire the perfection of our state, must also incline us (it were otherwise made up of contradictions) patiently to expect it, our appointed time. Herein we are to be subject to the "Father of our spirits,"—as to the "fathers of our flesh,"[2] when they shall think fit to give a full portion.

Besides all these subordinate principles, we are to consider the co-operation of a sovereign and supreme principle with them, and that is the blessed Spirit of God himself. He begets, raises, and cherisheth such desires after the blessedness of the heavenly state, as makes this patience most absolutely necessary. You find[3] where the apostle is speaking of his earnest aspiring and groaning,—"not to be unclothed" of this flesh, this earthly tabernacle, but,—"to be clothed upon:" as much as to say, 'To be unclothed,' is too low and mean a thing; hereby I only avoid the troubles of life. This can by no means terminate desires of so high a kind, and of so divine and heavenly an original. These were only the desires of a brute, oppressed by a sensible, too heavy burden. But the thing I aspire to and groan after, is to be 'clothed upon.'

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1. [2] Heb. xii. 9. [3] 2 Cor. v. 4.

It is somewhat positive and much higher; namely, the perfection of that state I am designed to, and by grace made capable of, wherein "mortality" is to be "swallowed up of life." These are desires proceeding not from the sense of what we feel, but from the attraction of what we see; and not from a brutal, but a divine nature: so he next tell us,[1] whence they were. "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." It is the Spirit of God working in us, that makes us thus restlessly aspire and groan. 'He that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God.' It is more than if it had been barely said, 'God hath wrought us for this selfsame thing.' So he might express a work common to him with other agents: as, if it had been said, '*He* hath wrought us for this selfsame thing, and so might *another*.' But 'he that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing is God:'—this is a far more emphatical way of speaking; that is, it doth assert Deity to him that doth this work; as much as to say, none but God could do such a thing. Therefore observe the form of expression here used, that we lose not the emphasis of it. The act, *working us for this same thing*, is not affirmed of God as it would in this form,—*God hath wrought us*. But *being God* or *Godhead* is affirmed of the agent; as much as to say, he cannot but be a God, that doth work this upon us. The other way of expression would serve to represent an action that were common, indefinitely, to one or another agent; as if we say 'the king walks, speaks,' etc. But to express an act peculiar to majesty, we would say, 'He that reigns, is the king.' This expression then, doth not only ascribe, but appropriate the work done to God. What! that moles, such dunghill worms, should thus aspire! He is a God that hath done this! For that such a work should be done upon such creatures, to mould them into such a frame, that now nothing terrestrial, nothing temporary, nothing within the region of mortality will satisfy; but they are

[1] 2 Cor. v. 5.

restless for that state, "wherein mortality shall be swallowed up of life;" "he that hath wrought us for this selfsame thing, is God:" this is the work of a Deity.

Therefore also are so solemn thanksgivings tendered to the Father for his having made us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,"[1] which he doth not only by bringing "life and immortality to light through the gospel,"[2] but by "giving the spirit of wisdom and revelation;" by "enlightening the eyes of our understanding, that we may know the hope of our calling,"[3]—shining into our souls with such a vivific, penetrative, and transforming light, as should change their whole frame, and fully attemper them thereto.

Now if it be a Divine power that hath excited such desires and given such a disposition, it must be a Divine power that must moderate them too; by giving also that patience, that shall enable us to wait for the fulfilling of them. And the rather doth there need the interposition of a God in the case, to make us endure, and patiently expect the state he hath wrought us for, inasmuch as the same Spirit that frames us for that state, (as we see, recurring to the place before-mentioned,) doth also *assure* us of it; "who hath given us the earnest of the Spirit." His Spirit, working in us, not only gives us a clear signification of the truth of the thing, but of our title; and therefore makes us so earnestly aspire and "groan" for it. Wherefore patience cannot but be the more necessary, and—the whole being entirely his work, who doth no inconsistent things—the easier too. And so we find[4] *in the eighth of the Romans* where it is said, that they that have "received the first-fruits of the Spirit, do groan within themselves;" they have the same aspirings that this apostle here speaks of,—"they groan earnestly within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body." The adoption; that is an allusion unto a known usage among the Romans, to whom the apostle here writes;

[1] Col. i. 12. [2] 2 Tim. i. 10. [3] Eph. i. 17, 18.
[4] Romans viii. 23, 24.

and therefore they were the more capable of understanding it. There was among them a twofold adoption:—

Private; when such a Patron did design to adopt such a one for his Son, and express his purpose to such as were concerned, as he judged it convenient; which was but inchoate adoption.

Public; when the action was solemn, *in foro,* and enrolled, a register kept of it. And this was the adoption the apostle here alludes to; the "manifestation of the sons of God."[1] Whereto agrees the expression of another apostle, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but when he shall appear, we shall be like him."[2] When the sons of God are to be manifested, they shall appear like themselves and like their Father. This is their public solemn adoption, when before men and angels, they are declared sons of God. And this is that we "groan" for, says the apostle, "having received the first-fruits of the Spirit." We groan for this, the perfection of our state; and thereupon would accordingly enter upon the inheritance, being assured that all his "children are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."[3]

But now, whereas, from these passages, "He that wrought us for the selfsame thing, is God;" that it is "he that made us meet for this inheritance;" that "the first-fruits of his Spirit" made us groan for it; we collect, that it is Divine power which gives this aptitude and inclination, and *limits* it. What is it, that doth so qualify Divine power, but Divine power?

It is indeed too plain that the influence of this power received into such a subject,—a mind in too great part yet carnalized, and situated amidst a sensible tempting world,—meets with sufficient allays, and enough to obstruct its tendencies towards an object yet out of sight. But all this obstruction, such a power can easily overcome. Therefore we are equally to admire the wisdom of God as his power; not as simply omnipotent, though it be so; but as

[1] Romans viii. 19. [2] 1 John iii. 2. [3] Romans viii. 17.

having its place and exercise in the most perfect Divine nature, in which all excellencies meet; and which therefore is not exerted *ad ultimum*, so as [to do all that Almighty power can do, but what is convenient and fit to be done; that can moderate itself, can move forward, and *sistere se*, stop its motion at pleasure; so as to provide that desire and patience, may, in our present state, consist; and that whilst God hath work for us to do and a station to fill up in this present world we may not be weary of life; or, by the expectation of blessedness in the other world, be made impatient of serving his purposes here, as long as it is his pleasure to continue us in this. So doth he all things, "according to the counsel of his will!"

Thus from the principles, whence patience proceeds, you may collect how absolutely necessary it is.

2. You may collect it too, from the ends which it serves. And I shall mention but these two, which are in the text: that which is nearer and more immediate—"our doing the will of God"; remoter and ultimate—"our inheriting the promise."

i. This nearer end is manifestly supposed to be so; and withal, that patience is necessary thereto. For when we are told, "Ye have need of patience, that when ye have done the will of God" it is plainly signified, patience conduces to our doing God's will, and that without patience we cannot do it. Not that patience is the proper principle of doing it, but active vigour; yet the concomitancy of patience is requisite hereto: not directly, in respect to the thing to be done, but the time through which the doing of it must be continued, and the expectation, which, as hath been said, is complicated therewith. To the former, vigorous activity, a promptitude and suitableness of mind and spirit to the Divine will, even a love of holiness whereof that will revealed is the measure, must be reckoned the genuine, requisite principle; as patience is to the latter. Therefore do we find labour ascribed to love, and patience to hope.[1] If

[1] 1 Thess. i. 3.

we have run well, and it is the will of God we shall lengthen out our course by a patient *continuance* in well-doing, and not express only a present agility, but patience in running the race,—without this we do not the will of God.

ii. But we are more largely to insist on the remoter and more ultimate end—"that we may inherit that promise" which we see is represented as the end of that *former* end: and patience made necessary to the latter, as it is necessary to the former. And can we in good earnest think of inheriting the promise, which is all of grace, whether God will or no? And, if he will the end, doth it not equally belong to him to will the way and method of our attaining it?

To be here somewhat particular. Two things we may conclude God doth ordinarily will concerning the way wherein he conducts and leads on those that peculiarly belong to him, to the blessed end and consummate state he designs them to, the one whereof is also requisite to the other; namely, first,—

Their gradual growth and improvement in holiness and all dutiful dispositions towards him, till they come nearer to maturity for glory, and a meetness for the heavenly state: secondly, Their maintaining an intercourse with himself in order hereto. These things he wills us to design through our whole course, though he is at liberty to shorten or lengthen our course, as to him seems meet.

(1.) Our own gradual improvement; hereto such patience is necessary. For perpetual fretting must naturally hinder our growth. "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect."[1] It cannot have its perfect work, if it have not its work and exercise this way, as well as others; "that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." If you have not patience, that you can endure such a delay, you will never grow,—will be always starvelings. Do we not observe the method wherein the Divine wisdom brings all things to their ἀκμή, or perfect state? vegetables, sensitive

[1] James i. 4.

creatures, — in the several kinds of both? Do we not observe it in ourselves? and in our children? whom (as the comedian *says*) we should most absurdly expect to 'be born old men.'

And as to our spiritual states,—after conversion or regeneration, what are the gifts vouchsafed by our glorified Lord meant for but our growth to a perfect man? Conversion, it is true, till work of that kind be all over, perfects the whole body; but the increase of knowledge and grace perfects each particular member or part.

And besides the improvement of habitual principles, there is a fulness of actual duty and service to be, to our utmost, endeavoured, that we "may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."[1] Every one hath his *pensum*, his allotment of work and time assigned him in this world, though some come not into the "vineyard till the eleventh hour." What a sharp reproach is that,[2] "I have not found thy works filled up— !" How glorious a character is that of the "man after God's own heart," that after he had "by the will of God served his generation,"—run through the course of service, which the Divine will had measured out to him for his own age wherein he lived,—he at length so seasonably "fell asleep;" was gathered to his fathers, as a shock of corn fully ripe. This is the state of growth and service; the other, the state of perfection and retribution. And to improvement and progress, patience is necessary, not only as being itself a part of our duty,—the want whereof therefore must infer a maim,—but as, also, it hath influence upon all other parts, and without which therefore there would be a universal languor and debility upon the whole new man; which is evident from what is to be added. It is "through the Lord alone, we are to make mention of his name."[3] "Without him we can do nothing,"[4]—neither grow nor serve. Therefore further is our patience necessary,

(2.) That so our communion and intercourse with God here, according as in our present state we are capable, may be

[1] Col. iv. 12. [2] Rev. iii. 2. [3] Isaiah xxvi. 13. [4] John xv. 5.

continued, and his communications to us therein,—which we daily need,—may not be obstructed. Herein lies the very life of our spirits, a continual intercourse between God and us. But of this, without such patience, we shall be incapable. See how the apostle argues:[1] "The fathers of our flesh chastised us, and we gave them reverence; how much more shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits, and live?" Shall we not be subject to the *Father of our spirits?*

We must remember, that he, whom the apostle here calls by a more general title, the "Father of spirits," doth elsewhere vouchsafe to be styled "the God of the spirits of all flesh."[2] A most condescending expression! That he, who hath so innumerable myriads of spirits whose dwelling is *not* with flesh, replenishing the spacious realms and regions of light and bliss above, should also not disdain to own a relation to this inferior sort of spirits that are so meanly lodged, even in frail and mortal flesh; and to express a concern about them, that somewhat of tolerable order might be preserved among them in their low and abject state, and therefore allow himself to be called the God of such spirits,—this is admirable vouchsafement! And because he is in this other place generally called the "Father of spirits," comprehending these with the rest; upon both accounts it belongs to him by prerogative, to determine what spirits shall dwell in flesh, and what shall not; how long any such spirits shall dwell in flesh, and when they shall be removed and taken out of this fleshly state. And observe what follows, "Shall we not be subject to the Father of spirits, *and live?*" The impatient will contend; they that cannot bear delay will quarrel, and that will be deadly to them. If we be not subject, we cannot live. He is the universal Father of spirits; all spirits are his offspring. And shall not he determine concerning the spirits he hath made, *which* shall, and *how long* they shall, inhabit flesh? as well the time as the thing itself, or who

[1] Heb. xii. 9. [2] Numb. xxvii. 16.

shall and who shall not? It is his pleasure that my spirit should so long animate, and inhabit such a piece of clay. If I am not subject to him, I shall not live! This is severely monitory, and extends far. It admonishes me of danger as to my final state. For what is here said hath reference to what is after said of the future vision of God, and our association to "the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect,"—whereof want of the patience prescribed through all the whole "race set before us,"[1] hazards our falling short. But how are we by impatience endangered, as to our final and eternal state of life? It is intimated that without being patient and subject, we cannot live *now*. Intercourse will be broken off between him and us; he will retire and withhold his influence: and if he do so, and "we pine away in our sins, how shall we then live?" as their misgiving hearts, *spoken of in Ezekiel,* presage.[2]

But if spiritual life already fail, which is of the same kind with blessed eternal life and is therein perfected, what shall become of that life itself, which is but the perfection of the other? If we cannot live now, how shall we live eternally? If not a day, how for ever?

It is true we are kept by the power of God, but it is "through faith unto salvation."[3] And faith is necessary to support our patience, as hath been noted. This our Saviour prayed for, to Peter, that amidst all his "winnowings," his "faith might not fail." And all this with this final reference, that "we might be followers of them, who, through faith and patience inherit the promises:"[4] which plainly shows, what is God's ordinary method of bringing his own at last to that inheritance.

And this, in the context, which we were last considering,[5] is copiously illustrated by the method observed in families; wherein a prudent father considers how long it is fit a son should be under discipline, whereof while he is patient, he

[1] Heb. xii. 1. [2] Ezek. xxxiii. 10. [3] 1 Pet. i. 5.
[4] Heb. vi. 12. [5] Heb. xii. 9, 10.

is under paternal care and enjoys the provisions of the family; but if he will not be subject, how shall he live?

This prudent conduct is not always observed by the "fathers of our flesh." They use, sometimes, harsh severities, more "for their own pleasure," and to gratify their own passion, than the child's "profit."

But with the "Father of spirits" no rash passions can have place. He only designs our profit, and improvement, in the highest, and most excellent kind; that is, to "make us partakers of his holiness," to make us more and more God-like, and fit, at length, to be admitted into the "presence of his glory." And whereas the mere deferring of our expected felicity is some chastisement and rebuke upon us for our yet continuing impurities and disorders, there are also other afflictions that befall us in this our expecting state, which, though they proceed from this world's hatred, may proceed from the love of God, and are meant to work out for us greater glory;[1] as now they tend to make us partakers, in a greater measure, of his holiness; which, as it is his glory, will be ours: and by his influence, a "peaceable fruit of righteousness" accrues to us and grows up in us, upon which we are to feed and live. Now what conversation can there be between a father in a family, and a son in minority and under discipline, but by wise and tender care on the part of the former and the dutiful submission of the latter? Or can the son hope the sooner to come by his inheritance by wayward and contentious behaviour towards such a father?

So that both from the principles whence such patience proceeds, and the ends which it serves, we may collect the necessity of it unto every serious Christian.

And now how copious use might we make of so important a subject! But we must contract. We may learn from it,

I. The desperate condition of those wretched creatures that are of terrene minds, whose hearts, by habitual and prevailing inclination, cleave to this earth and this earthly

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

state. *They* can apprehend no "need of patience" in expecting the blessedness of heaven. It is no grievance to them not to partake therein. They had rather live where they are; are better pleased with their present state of life. Tell them of patience in waiting for the heavenly felicity,—it is language they understand not! Oh, the wretched state of those forlorn souls, whose habitual temper makes them incapable of the exercise or need of this patience!

It may be said indeed of many a good man, that he doth not covet death—which, for itself, no man can. But it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet blessedness, which, in a general, indeterminate notion, every man covets. But there is no truly good man, none that is regenerate and born of God, who doth not particularly covet that wherein blessedness truly lies and doth consist. For all such are "begotten to the lively hope—of the undefiled inheritance, reserved in heaven" for them;[1] nor can be supposed, when they covet blessedness, not to covet perfect blessedness. Such may, indeed, not yet covet to die; because yet they may be under some doubt concerning their present state Godward; and so such a one doth not know, whether, if he die, he shall enter upon a blessed state or no. But, in the meantime, it cannot be said of any good man, that he doth not covet to be blessed; though for that single reason—because he doubts of his title to the heavenly blessedness—he covets not death. Therefore that doubt doth not extinguish his desire of blessedness, but suspends only the desire of death, as an uncertain *way* to it,—because it is equally the entrance into a state of misery to them who have no title to blessedness, as it is unto a blessed state to them that have a title; and concerning their present title, they are still in doubt,—which way they hope, by Divine assistance, if they have more time, may yet be gained: whereas, upon supposition that doubt were removed, they would be glad to be gone.

But this is their miserable case, whose hearts cleave to this

[1] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

earth, that they prefer it before all the blessedness and glory of heaven; and rather bless themselves *from* it, than desire to be blessed *by* it. If they can but live pleasantly and as long as they would do here, take heaven and all the blessedness and glory of it that will, for them!

I would fain have you apprehend the deplorable condition of such men upon sundry accounts.

1. Their temper differs from that of all the children of God; they are quite of another complexion from the whole family that belongs to him. For all that are the "sons of God," as they are born "from above,"[1] (ἄνωθεν,) they are born with a disposition heavenward. Therefore if such a man could but view and behold himself, he could not but cry out, affrighted and amazed, 'God be merciful to me! what sort of creature am I? If God be not merciful to me, to change me, his mercy can never own me for his; I am quite of a different make from all that ever had leave to call him Father! They all love heaven more than earth, and I love earth more than heaven!' That a man's own temper should distinguish him from all the Divine offspring,—methinks it should be considered with dread and horror! That there should be a sort of men in this world, that are all lovers of God, as their best good, and longing to be at home with him in the heavenly state, and I to be severed from them all!—my heart being strange to him, and always tending downward! This is a dismal thing, a sad reflection to any one, that can and will reflect, and be so true to himself as to own this to be his sense, 'I had rather live amidst the vanities of this world, than partake in the glories of heaven! I had rather please my flesh and sense on earth, than enjoy the felicity of saints and angels above!' A fearful case! For now you have nothing to do with this character, belonging to holy men,—of standing in sensible "need of patience, that you may inherit the promise!" Nor,

2. Can you inherit. For as all, so only, God's children

[1] John iii. 3.

are his heirs. They are no heirs, who are not his children. "Cast out the bondwoman, and her son;" he cannot inherit with the "son of the promise." The children "of Jerusalem above are free;" the rest are slaves. Can it be thought worthy of God to have bondmen, and slaves to vile terrene affections, for his sons? Can they inherit the blessedness of heaven, that never loved, desired, or chose it, that always preferred this earth before it? Can any be brought to heaven violently, whether they will or no? Whoever have come thither, first sought it, as the "better country." "Therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God;"[1] which implies he would be ashamed to be called the God of an earthly-minded generation of men. And will he ever do the thing that he would be ashamed of? So ignominious a thing as to take base sons of the earth into his kingdom (who may all say, *in regno nati sumus*, 'we are born of the kingdom we belong to') for his children and heirs!

3. Notwithstanding their obstinate inclination and adherence to this earth, they still live in the continual fear of being removed out of it, namely, if they bethink themselves. And what sort of felicity is that that can be blasted and extinguished by a thought! that depends only upon a present forgetfulness! How afflicting a misery to be united in affection with that, as my best good, which I continually fear to lose and to have rent away from me!

4. Such addictedness to this earth, that is, the desire of a perpetual abode here,—which is the complexion of all earthly-minded men, who herein never limit themselves; but should they live here never so many ages, they would be always of the same mind,—I say their earthly propension is liable to be encountered continually, not with fear only, but despair; and is therefore most vain, irrational, absurd, and tormenting to themselves: *vain*, for it contributes nothing to their end. Can any man's adhesion to this earth, be it never so peremptory, perpetuate or prolong his abode upon it? *Irrational*,

[1] Heb. xi. 16.

for what is there in this state itself, to be alleged as a plausible reason, why one should desire it to be everlasting? *Absurd*, for it is to set one's heart upon a known impossibility. What can be more ludicrous than to contend with necessity, which will at last be too hard for me? to cherish a desire in my soul, wherein I know I must at length be disappointed? And it cannot, in the issue, but be *tormenting*, and even in the foresight of it. Fear afflicts; but despair cannot do less than torment. How amazing is the forethought of being "plucked away from one's dwelling-place, rooted out from the land of the living!"[1] An immortal spirit torn out of mortal flesh, unto which it is now however so inwardly connaturalized as to have no thought, but with abhorrence, of any other state or dwelling! That one's soul should sit trembling on the lip, and muttering, 'I fain would stay, but must go! and leave behind me whatsoever I loved best! And not only quit all my former known delights and wonts, but pass into unknown darkness and woes! *Animula vagula blandula*,' etc. (as he desperately) 'Oh, my poor wandering, self-flattering soul, whither art thou going—into what dismal, horrid places, where thou shalt not jest as thou wast wont?'

That a man should thus recount with himself: 'I have had my good things; my pleasant days are all over, never to return more! And now must I finish them by so violent a death! Driven away, as the wicked is said to be, out of light into darkness, and chased out of the world.'[2] How calamitous is this case; and how much the more, that it scarce leaves room for a rational or even for a religious pity! For we read in the mentioned Psal. lii., when we are told[3] of "God's plucking, and rooting such out of their dwelling-place," etc., that "the righteous shall see and fear, and laugh at them." At once they reverence God, and deride them![4] And are justified herein by what follows,[5] "Lo, this is the

[1] Ps. lii. 5. [2] Job xviii. 5, 18. [3] Verse 5.
[4] Verse 6. [5] Verse 7.

man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness," namely, that he acted so foolish a part, in so plain a case; imagining that wealth and wickedness in conjunction, could signify more than all the mercy and justice of a Deity; and did therefore that ridiculous thing, so deservedly to be laughed at by all that are wise and just, as to attempt by so much earth to fill up the room of God! That a reasonable and immortal mind should place its supreme desire upon a terrene good, from which it shortly must be plucked away, against the strongest reluctance,—veneration of the Divine *nemesis* overcomes compassion in this case! Pity towards them is not extinguished, but its exercise suspended only, by religion towards God.

5. This temper of mind, which ought to signify with professed Christians, hath in it a downright repugnancy unto whole Christianity. For consider and compare things. Here is a heart cleaving to this earth; but did Christ establish his religion to plant men in the earth? Was it not to prepare them for heaven, and then translate them thither? "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,"[1] and "he hath redeemed us to God by his blood,"[2] and "to deliver us from this present world."[3] His kingdom, in the whole constitution and frame of it, is avowedly not of this world; but terminates upon eternity and an everlasting state: and therefore, "they that mind earthly things," are said "to be enemies to the cross of Christ."[4] Their whole business is nothing else but fighting against, tilting at the cross; that is, counteracting the design for which Christ was crucified! And can it enter into the imagination of any man, that hath not forfeited the repute of an intelligent creature or quite lost his understanding; or, if he retain anything of reason, that hath not abandoned his religion,—to think that the Son of God should come down from heaven and die on earth, to counteract himself, or only to procure that such as we, might

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [2] Rev. v. 9. [3] Gal. i. 4. [4] Phil. iii. 18, 19.

be rich men, be in friendship with this world and enmity with God? here live, eat, drink, trade, gather wealth; and forget who made us, and redeemed us with his blood? Was this the end for which the world was to be Christianized, and Christianity set up among men? and for the founding whereof, the Head and Author of this profession died upon a cross? What an insolent absurdity is it in such as call themselves Christians, to live in so open, continual, and direct opposition to the very end for which Christ died!

6. And in the mentioned case, their very frame carries with it a direct opposition and contradiction to their own profession; that is, supposing they live under the gospel and profess the Christian religion. They fight not only against Christ, (even dying,) but themselves. And this is that which the apostle considers with so deep sense and tenderness, in that mentioned *passage*,[1] "There are some of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, they are enemies to the cross of Christ—they mind earthly things." But, in opposition to men of this character, he adds, "our conversation is in heaven." All runs into this at last; they that are Christians indeed, have their conversation in heaven. I now tell you of these earthly-minded ones, even weeping, that they unchristian themselves! What compassion doth it challenge,—to see men baptized into Christ's death, to behold immortal spirits united with "bodies washed with pure water," therein renouncing this world and all its pollutions, yet sunk into carnality! *buried* in flesh where they should but *dwell;* living under the gospel, where "life and immortality are brought to light," regardless of immortal life; afraid to die, yet void of any inclination to the way of living for ever; and that, while they pretend to it, do really love their death which their profession obliges them to shun and dread![2] So are they made up of contradictions and inconsistencies with themselves! In the forementioned context,[3] the way and course of walking, which the blessed apostle observed and

[1] Phil. iii. 18, 19. [2] Prov. viii. 36. [3] Phil. iii. 18, 19.

lamented with tears, was such as none of them that took it could be supposed to avow. They were not professed enemies to Christ and Christianity, of whom he complains. It could be no surprise to him, or strange thing, to see men practise according to their known principles. But that enmity to Christ and his great design should appear in the lives of Christians, pierced his very soul; and the more for what there follows,—

7. That their "end will be destruction." For they were to be treated, and dealt with at last, not according to what they did falsely pretend, but what they truly were; besides, that their destruction *naturally* follows their earthly inclination. They have that death-mark upon them,—which is also the true cause why they cannot live. All their designs and inclinations terminate upon earth, that hath nothing in it that souls can live by; and they are enemies to the cross of Christ; that is, to the design of his death thereon, in compliance wherewith stands their very life. For, if "they are crucified with him, they live."[1] The love of this world *must* be deadly to them, excluding Divine love, which is their life. In the same degrees wherein this world and all worldly lusts are crucified by the cross of Christ,[2] their true life is renewed and improved. Who can think less is meant by saying so expressly, "to be carnally minded is death—to be spiritually minded is life and peace"?[3] When death is consummate and finished, their lusts, grown mature and wanting external objects, turn inward with most intense fury, as never dying worms, on the miserable creature itself. Here is the fulness of death!

8. Their destruction must be so much the more grievous, for having lived under the gospel, where the state and the way of life are so plainly revealed. There God's design is laid open; only to continue them under such a dispensation here,—as the means of discovery and operation,—to reveal heaven to them, and prepare and fit them for the heavenly

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Gal. vi. 14. [3] Rom. viii. 6.

state, that they may seasonably be removed thither. But this would never enter into their hearts; while the amusements of their present earthly state have more powerfully diverted them, disposed them to dream, and trifle away the precious hours of their gospel-day rather than improve them to their proper end. To have their spirits remain unimpressed by the gospel! They have got nothing by it, of what is intended, and aimed at. To have lived so many years, twenty, thirty, forty years, or more, under the gospel, and have got nothing of a correspondent frame to so glorious a ministration! A gospel, which calls men to God's eternal kingdom and glory,—to be so defeated of its great design! How is this to be accounted for? *That* is the final term of this call, namely, the "eternal kingdom and glory" of God.[1] He calls to repentance, faith, and holiness, and to the "fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ:" but the ultimate term of this calling is, "his eternal kingdom and glory," and by Jesus Christ, as it is there expressed, and from the *all*, or fulness of grace; "the God of all grace." But now, to have an ear invincibly deaf to this call, that stones might as well have been called to heaven, clods of earth to turn themselves into stars, and fix themselves in the highest orbs,—what a deplorable case is this! What serious heart would it not melt and dissolve into tears, that from under such a gospel souls should be dropping down into perdition continually, and we have no way to help it! And if this be a compassionable case to them that behold it, their misery is great that shall endure it! Great, if we consider how great the salvation was, which they neglected: great, if it be considered, how provoking the affront was to its great prime revealer as well as author; "which began to be spoken by the Lord;" and the Divine attestation afforded to the after-publishers,—being "confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness;"[2] whereupon it is demanded, how can the neglecters escape? Great, if we consider their

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 10.

[2] Heb. ii. 3, 4.

odious and ignominious comparison and preference of the vanities of this earth to the Divine and heavenly glory! And add, that they perish in sight of this glorious state; "not far from the kingdom of God;" having it in view!

II. Let us see, on the contrary hand, the blessedness of them whose hearts are supremely set upon the heavenly felicity; and who, therefore, only need patience, that they may wait till God sees fit to translate them to it. There are many things to be considered here.

1. Their spirits are attempered to the heavenly state: hereupon they may daily reflect, and view the kingdom of God begun within them, and live in a very pleasant, comfortable expectation that the first-fruits will be followed by a blessed harvest; that the "kingdom within them," consisting in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,"[1] will issue in their being at last received into a most perfectly glorious kingdom; that he, who "hath wrought them for that selfsame thing,"—the state, wherein "mortality shall be swallowed up of life,"—"hath given them the earnest of the Spirit," and thereby assured to them the inheritance itself.[2]

2. They *feel*, therefore, within themselves that their patience is not indifference; much less that it imports aversion to the state they profess to be waiting for; that they love not this present world, and are *not* loath to leave it. Herein communing with themselves, they can appeal to the kind eye of their gracious Lord; and say, "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;" and that with so superlative a love, that there is nothing in all this world which they would not willingly leave, to be with him, as that which, for themselves and considering their own interest only, they count to be best of all. Whereupon also, therefore,

3. Their hearts will bear them this testimony, that their expectation with patience is understood and designed by them, as their duty. They exercise it in compliance with the Divine pleasure. They dare not prescribe to him about the

[1] Rom. xiv. 17. [2] 2 Cor. v. 4, 5.

time when he will take them up. He enables them patiently to wait, as having formed their hearts to a governable temper, and to be "subject to the Father of spirits:" and apprehending, that as he is also peculiarly styled the "God of the spirits of all flesh," it must belong to him to determine, both what spirits shall sojourn in flesh, and what shall not; as also to limit the time of their abode there; how long they shall continue in that mean dwelling, and when they shall leave it. Conscience of duty, in this very case, is in itself a pleasant reflection and sensation!

Whence, it appearing that it is matter of duty, this is further to be considered by them,

4. That their very expectation itself will be rewarded; that since they were willing to wait, though they had real, vivid desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; and that their willingness to wait was not idle, but conjunct with a willingness also to serve him in this world; they shall have so much the more ample reward in heaven: their very heaven itself will be so much the more grateful; and they shall have so much the more "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom" and glory.

They may, therefore, encourage themselves from that consolatory exhortation of the apostle: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."[1] And if *no* part of that work shall be in vain,—nothing of it, according to that connexion which the grace of God hath settled between work and reward, shall be without its recompence; nor consequently any part of that time in this our state of expectation, which we had for the doing of such work, shall pass without its relative consideration thereto, if only we had opportunity to give "one cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple."

Therefore, to shut up all: let us now apply, and bend

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 58.

ourselves to this one thing; to get into such a temper of soul, as that we may find and feel we need patience to wait for the blessedness of heaven. If we do not sensibly need patience, we are dead, there is no life in us. If we live that life that tends towards God and will end in eternal life, that life will have sense belonging to it, and that sense will make us feel our need of patience; we shall wait, not like stupid stocks, but like obedient children. And when we see this to be the genuine temper of a Christian spirit, how uneasy should it be to us, not to be able to say, 'Blessed be God, it is *our* temper!' Which, if we do find, our own sense not letting us doubt that, upon the mentioned account, we *need* patience; our next care must be, that we *have* it,—which will not exclude our feeling the need of it. For when we find, that through the mercy of God, in some competent measure we have it, our sense of the need of it will not cease; that is, we shall never account that we have it as an unnecessary or needless thing. We shall, indeed, truly judge, with just gratitude, that we do not altogether *want* it; but shall apprehend we *need* it still, as that we cannot be without. Yea, and the more we have of it, and are under its dominion and possessive power, the more we shall apprehend its value and excellency, and how needful it is to us.

But that when we feel our need, we may not be destitute of it, ought to be our great and very principal care.

Nor are we to content ourselves with the mere self-indulgent opinion, that we have it laid up, as in a napkin, in the dull and lazy *habit;* but must take care that we have it in act and exercise; which is the express import of that apostolical exhortation, "Let patience have its perfect work:"[1] as much as to say, take care, not merely that you have the principle,—as where *one* good and holy principle belonging to the new creature is, there *all* are,—but that we have it in its present use and operation, or in an actual promptitude and readiness for use and exercise, as the occasions that call for it

[1] James i. 4.

shall occur; that then we be not as "men of might," that (though not supposed to want) cannot "find their hands," that is, have them not ready for present use.

Moreover, we are here also to consider that though patience is needful, as that text imports, upon the account of mere absence and expectation of the good, that is, principally, the final blessedness contained in the promise; and that this alone is a true ground upon which patience is necessary, if we look upon the case abstractly and *in thesi*, or in the theoric and contemplation: yet when we come to the *exercise* of patience, we actually find no such case wherein the expectation of this promised good is *alone;* but variously complicated with many other occasions in this our present state, while we dwell in such a world and in such bodies, that must increase our need of patience. For taking the whole matter, as may be said, *in concreto*, and as comprehending all our present circumstances, we may be put to expect the promised good under much suffering for the sake of Christ and a good conscience, as is signified in this context:[1] "Enduring a great fight of afflictions—made gazing-stocks, by reproaches on ourselves, and as the companions of others so used"—suffering the "spoiling of our goods," even our all as to this world; so as nothing shall remain to us but the expected "better,"—the enduring,—"heavenly substance."

And we may thus be obliged to *expect*, amidst great bodily pains and languishings, the concussions and shakings of our earthly tabernacles, while as yet they come not down,—"the outward man" daily perishing, but we know not how long it will be ere it actually perish: besides, the more grievous distempers of the "inward man," *that* not being so sensibly "renewed," as with many it is not, "day by day."[2] And thus, if we had not others' burdens, we are burden enough to ourselves.

Whereupon, the greater our need of patience is, the more earnestly we should endeavour for it: and we are to use

[1] Heb. x. 32—34. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 14.

very earnest endeavours in order hereto, both with God and with ourselves.

With God, by incessant prayer, as the "God of all grace," that, as the apostle speaks in another instance, we "may abound in this grace also."

Another apostle[1] speaks of this Christian excellency under the name of *wisdom*. It is plain he so intends; for having given the exhortation, "Let patience have its perfect work—"[2] he subjoins, "If any man lack wisdom—"[3] that is, as is evident, *this* wisdom, patiently to acquiesce in the Divine pleasure, under whatsoever exercises or of what continuance soever; than which no part of wisdom can be more necessary, or anything more apparently wise.

But we see what his further direction is upon that supposition. If any man lack this wisdom, let him "ask it of God," etc.: agreeably whereto he is pleased to be styled the "God of patience;"[4] to let us know, whither in this apprehended and felt necessity, our great resort must be.

And how kind and compassionate is the encouragement given in the following words of that former text,[5] that he "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;" is not apt to reproach frail creatures with the folly of their impatient frettings; but freely, upon their request, to give them that composure of mind which may show them to be truly wise, and wherein their wisdom doth eminently consist.

Moreover, we find that elsewhere experience is appealed to for further encouragement, and as a demonstration of God's faithfulness, in this case:[6] "No temptation hath befallen you, but what is common to man," or incident to our present state, and for the bearing whereof you had Divine support; and "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted," or tried, "above what you are able," or beyond the ability which he will graciously afford you; "but will, with the trial, make a way to escape, that you may be

[1] James i. 4, 5. [2] Ver. 4. [3] Verse 5. [4] Rom. xv. 5.
[5] James i. 5. [6] 1 Cor. x. 13.

able to bear it," that is, such a way of escape, as will not *avoid* 'bearing,' but consist with it; and wherein a vouchsafed ability to bear shall consist; so as that you come off unharmed and without real hurt or prejudice. And since patience is this ability to bear, how reasonable is it, with a filial faith and confidence to supplicate for it!

Yet, as we are thus by fervent prayer to strive and wrestle with God, it will argue we are grossly neglectful, or very ignorant of God's usual methods of communicating his gracious assistances, if also we do not, by proper and suitable means, strive and take pains with ourselves, that we may obtain what we pray for.

And nothing can be more suitable to reasonable creatures, that are not to be wrought upon as stocks or stones, but as men and Christians capable of consideration and thought; and of *such* thoughts and considerations, as God's own word, which we profess to believe, hath given ground for; of which considerations there are many wherewith we should urge our own souls to the exercise of such patience as the present case calls for; that is, while as yet we are to continue expectants, waiting his time for our receiving the promise.

In this way we should therefore commune and discourse this matter with ourselves: 'Am not I God's creature, the work of his hands? Hath he not given me breath and being? Was it not for his pleasure or by his will, that I, with the rest of his creatures, am, and was created? Did it not depend upon his will, whether I should be or not be, have any place in his creation, be anything or nothing for ever? Did not his own free choice determine in what rank or order of creatures I should be placed? whether among frogs, toads, serpents, or men? Could I choose my place and station in the creation of God? How favourable a vouchsafement was it, that he made me a creature capable of thought, of design, of felicity, of immortality, and eternal life! of receiving such a promise as I am now expecting to be accomplished and fulfilled unto me! What could be considered here, but

"the good pleasure of God's goodness?" How impossible was it, that so arbitrary and royal bounty should be prescribed unto? And shall I not now wait with patience for the final result and issue of it?

'But how overpowering a consideration should it be with me, to think, I am not only his creature, but one that had offended him; and how unexpressibly what I *expect* is above the condition of a revolted creature! one fallen from God, in rebellion against him, and by nature a child of wrath; one engaged in the common conspiracy of the apostate sons of Adam, against their sovereign rightful Lord! that were agreed, in one sense, to say to God, "depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;" and were all best pleased, to be as "without God in the world!" Whence is it to me—one of that vile, degenerate, rebellious crew—that a promise should be before me and in view, pointed at me (as it is to all that disbelieve and despise it not) of entering into the blessed rest of God himself;[1] or, according to the nearer and more immediate reference of the words we have in hand,[2] of having in heaven the "better and enduring substance!" And shall I not patiently wait for it? Why am I so over-hasty, to snatch at what I am but dutifully to receive, and with highest admiration of the rich grace of the glorious Giver?

'Is the gift itself wholly in his power, and not the time? Did it not entirely depend upon his pleasure, to give or not to give? And doth it not as much belong to him to determine when his gift shall take place? Is the substance in his choice, and not the circumstance? The thing itself was infinitely above expectation; and shall it now be grievous to expect the appointed time? There was a time and state of things, when with me an offender, an obstinate, impenitent rebel, no other expectation could remain, but "of wrath and fiery indignation." Is it of mere gracious vouchsafement, that I comfortably expect at all?

[1] Heb. iv. 1. [2] Chap. x. 34.

and shall I count it a hardship, that I am not presently told how long?'

And how relieving a thing should it be against the weariness of such an expectation, that so great a good is sure at last; namely, as that contained in the promise. For is not "He faithful who hath promised?" And hath he not so graciously condescended as to add to his promise his oath, that "by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation?"[1]

And when this assurance is given to the heirs of promise,[2] that is, to the regenerate,—"for if children then heirs,"[3]—nothing can be surer than this, in the general, that all that are regenerate, or sincere Christians, shall inherit at one time or other. Nothing is left doubtful but the time when; that is, the time when they shall die. For they that "die in Christ" are past danger; and the method is prescribed us, of making our calling and election sure.

When therefore this is done, how great is the consolation that one time or other, I am sure to die! What can be surer? It is not in the power of all the world, not of the greatest enemy I can have in it, to keep me always there, or hinder my going out of it at my appointed time. Such therefore our Saviour, under the name of his "friends,"[4] forbids "to fear them that kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do;" which is a triumph over the impotency of the utmost human malice against good men. The greatest hurt they have it in their power to do them, is to put it out of their own power ever to hurt them more, and to put them into the possession of the most blessed state!

This consideration therefore should, at once, both make us patient of death, when expected as an apprehended evil; and of the expectation of the consequent good, to which it is an appointed, unalterable introduction.

Of death, as that which must intervene, and in reference

[1] Heb. vi. 17, 18. [2] Ver. 17. [3] Rom. viii. 17. [4] Luke xii. 4.

whereto itself, "we have need of patience, that we may inherit the promise." For "that which is sown is not quickened, except it die." It is necessary we be reconciled to this wise and equal law of our sovereign Lord, by which "it is appointed for all men once to die:" that we be satisfied and well pleased that this world be not continued always, for the production and sustenance of men "born in sin:" that rebels against Heaven are not to be everlastingly propagated here on earth: that God shall not thus perpetuate his own dishonours, and prevent the judgment that is to shut up this scene and set all things right between him and his revolted creatures, after apt and suitable means used for their reduction and recovery. With how dutiful submission and complacency should we yield, for our parts, to this constitution; so as for ourselves, not to wish for an exemption! For how can we harbour a desire in our hearts which we cannot form into a prayer? And how would such a prayer sound,—'Lord, when all this world is to die round about me, let me be an excepted instance? Let me live here always?' How presumptuous a request were it, and how foolish! For is not the course of God's procedure herein, from age to age, a constant avowing of the righteousness and of the immutability of his counsel in reference to it? It is a wretched thing to be engaged in a war with necessity made by righteousness itself, and the most invincible reason! A pagan, represented in the height of madness, was not so mad as not to see this;[1] that 'he is a wretched creature, that is unwilling to die, when the world is everywhere dying with him!' Our patience, possessing our souls, will not endure there should be such a *pugna*,—a reluctant disposition not overcome,—against this inviolable statute and determination; which disposition must be equally disloyal to our Maker and uncomfortable to ourselves.

And this consideration should make us patient in expecting the consequent good whereto death is the introduction,—that

[1] Miser est quicunque non vult, mundo secum moriente, mori.—*Sen. Trag.*

the expected good is so ascertained to the friends of Christ, that death intervening cannot be hurtful or be any bar to our attainment of the good promised; nor is rationally formidable, since we cannot suppose our Lord would forbid our fearing what we have *reason* to fear. But unto his friends he forbids the fearing of them that "can kill the body only, and, after that, have no more that they can do:" but requires them to "fear him, that can cast soul and body into hell." It is plainly implied that "killing the body" is no hurt or damage to the soul; it "cannot separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;"[1] no, nor the "principalities" and "powers," which, in that juncture, in the very article or instant of dying, will be sure to do their uttermost to work that separation.

And considering this bodily death as an introduction to blessedness, it not only can infer no damage, but it must be our great advantage; which is implied in the mentioned context: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will the Son of man confess before the angels of God."[2] For though it is not the lot of every Christian to be an *actual* martyr, yet every true Christian is an *habitual* one. Whosoever therefore dies with a fixed disposition of spirit, never upon any terms to deny Christ, He assures such He will solemnly own them, even before all the angels; which must include their being admitted into a most blessed state.

When also such are expressly told that "all things are theirs,"[3] and "death" is reckoned into the account of the "all things," this cannot but signify that death is to be, not only no detriment to them, but their advantage and gain; which is also plainly spoke out:[4] "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And that most gainful good being so fully assured to them, they have all the reason in the world to expect it with patience.

Moreover, how consolatory must it be to them that have

[1] Rom. viii. 38, 39.
[2] Luke xii. 8.
[3] 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.
[4] Phil. i. 21.

any taste of spiritual and heavenly things, that so pleasant a way is prescribed them of living, through the whole time of their expecting state, that is, as long as "they live in the flesh;" namely, to "live by faith in the Son of God."[1] How unspeakable is the joy and pleasure of that way of living,—that all the days of our abode in the flesh, we have so great a one as the glorious ever-blessed Son of God to depend upon; by continual and often-repeated vital acts, resigning ourselves to his conduct and government, and deriving from that "fulness" which it "pleased the Father should dwell" in him, all needful supplies of grace, spirit, life, and righteousness; and that we are taught to consider him, not as a stranger or one unrelated to us or unconcerned for us, but "who hath loved us," and (which is the highest evidence hereof) "given himself for us," that great, rich, and glorious self! In whom, therefore, our faith may not only repose and acquiesce, but triumph and glory! And that we may do thus, not by rare, unfrequent, and long intermitted intervals; but as long as we breathe in mortal flesh, even to the last breath! Should such a way of living be tedious and irksome to us? Though we expect long, we are not to expect as forlorn creatures, "without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world!"

Therefore in how high transports of spirit should we exult, and bless God, who hath so stated our case; endeavouring to our uttermost, and earnestly aspiring to, that excellent temper of spirit,[2]—to be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks!"

And how overpowering a consideration should this be with us! What! am I to aim at that high pitch of all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, and, instead of repining, to give thanks; and have I not attained so far as to mere patience? My not being able to endure the enjoined expectation, should make me not endure myself!

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Col. i. 11, 12.

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING SOME MEMORIAL OF

DOCTOR HENRY SAMPSON,

A LATE NOTED PHYSICIAN IN THE CITY OF LONDON.

Although the foregoing discourse is grounded upon the same text of Scripture that was insisted on soon after the notice was brought me of this worthy person's decease, and upon the occasion thereof, yet this discourse itself cannot admit to be called a funeral sermon. The frequent and inward conversation I had with him, divers years, gave me ground to apprehend that the temper and complexion of his mind and spirit did very much agree with the sense and import of this text: which, when I heard of his death, first led my thoughts to it; and was my inducement to say something of it in public, with some particular reference to him, in whom I had seen an exemplification of it in an eminent degree. But of what was then said, I could now give no distinct account. For having then no thought of its further publication, and my own long languishings presently ensuing, what was spoken upon that occasion was with me lost. Nor was it afterwards decent to offer at publishing a sermon for the *funeral* of one, though very dear to me, that was deceased so long before.

Yet God affording me, at length, some respiration from the extremity of those painful distempers that had long afflicted me; apprehending that a discourse upon this subject might be of some use to divers others, besides the present hearers,

I did, by intervals, set myself to reconsider it: and only now take this occasion to annex some memorial of this excellent person, that first drew my thoughts to it.

He was long a member, and lived in communion with many of us, in the same church, namely, by the space of thirty years, under the pastoral inspection of the Reverend Dr. Jacomb, and of him who, with great inequality, succeeded him. This he signified himself, in a paper written by his own hand, and delivered to me when we were entering upon the administration of the Lord's supper the last time that God ordered him that opportunity with us.

The paper was thus:

'Sir,

'It is my request to you, that you will please to acquaint the congregation with the great sense I have of the mercy of God, that hath afforded me communion with them and their ministry for thirty years together.

'But now, being, by the providence of God, deprived of my health in the city, I am to seek relief thereof in the country air, and shall thereby be in a great measure deprived of those blessings; yet I earnestly desire their prayers for me and my family, that, in some sort of such intercourse, our communion may continue still, if not in body, yet in spirit.

'Your servant,

'Henry Sampson.'

He now found himself constrained by his declining age and growing distempers, to retire from us, but not without very great reluctancy, into a village at no great distance from the city; but which, for change of air, was necessary, and, as he found, relieving to him.

From thence, his earnest desire to visit his relations and native country, engaged him in a long journey, as far as Nottinghamshire. And that journey brought him into the

"better, even the heavenly country:" God so ordering it, that near the place where he drew his first breath, he should draw his last; and end a very holy useful life, not far from the very spot where he began to live. For reaching the seat of a reverend brother of his, near to that of his birth, he there found, but for a very few days, a *temporal*, and there entered upon his *eternal*, rest: so falling a little short of the *patrias sedes*,—the place that had been the dwelling of his earthly parents,—by a joyful anticipation he sooner arrived at his heavenly Father's house, and found his place among the "many mansions" and "everlasting habitations," where was to be his proper and perpetual home.

It is not now my design to write the history of his life; the former part, and therefore the longer course and tract whereof, must have been more known to divers of our society, than it could be to me; though I have had much opportunity also, within the space of twenty years by-past, to understand and know much of it. But that must contain many things, which, though useful in their kind, my circumstances allow me not to relate.

Nor shall I enlarge in giving his character, though the subject is copious: for my present infirmities will make my limits narrow, whether I will or no.

But a man of so real value and usefulness in his station and of so instructive and exemplary a conversation, ought not to be neglected, or be let slide off the stage from among us without some such observation as may some way answer a debt owing to his memory, and be a real gain and advantage to ourselves.

He began his course, favoured by the Author of nature with very good natural parts; and very early enriched with communications of the more excellent kind, by the God of all grace.

Herewith, having his spirit seasoned and deeply tinctured betimes, "the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom," became, near the beginning of his course, the governing principle thereof.

His choice was, therefore, of that way and state, wherein he, in the general, conceived he might most glorify God and do most good to men.

And because he thought he might serve those ends best, in that high and noble employment wherein he should be obliged principally and most directly to intend the saving of men's souls, thither he more immediately bent and directed his preparatory endeavours.

And, therefore, though in his academical studies,—wherein he spent several years,—he neglected no part of that rational learning, which was most fitly conducing and serviceable to this his purpose; yet he most earnestly applied himself to the gaining a thorough acquaintance with those languages wherein the Holy Scriptures were originally written; and spared no cost to procure great variety of the best and most celebrated editions of both the Testaments, with other helps for the attaining of that most necessary knowledge; whereof his library, so richly furnished in that kind, did appear, after his decease, a full evidence: to the bettering of divers other libraries, of such as he had formerly been wont to hear; and among them,—as I must, with gratitude acknowledge,—by his special kindness and bequest, my *own*.

Accordingly this had been his calling, if the way of managing it could as much have been the matter of his choice, guided by his judgment and conscience, as the calling itself had been.

But things falling out in this respect otherwise before he could solemnly enter upon it, he seasonably diverted from it to that which he judged the next best, and wherein the *persons* of men were still to be the objects of his care: things of higher excellency than lands and riches; as life and the body are, by the verdict of our Saviour, of more worth than their perquisites, food and raiment, unto which ample estates and revenues are but more remotely subservient.

And the vicinity of this to that other most excellent calling is so near, that it is an easy step from it to the affairs of the other; which we see exemplified in that excellent

person, a dear and most worthy relative of the deceased;[1] unto whose historical account of him, subjoined to this discourse, I refer the reader for fuller information; whose most useful and elaborate works may not only occasion us to consider theology as every one's business, or the calling of a divine as in some respect transcendental, and running through every man's calling; but that of a physician as more nearly allied to it than any other,—many excellent speculations being common and, as those works show, of great importance to both: and in which performance that accurate writer doth not, indeed, preach to the vulgar, but instructs *preachers*. And, as it hath been sometime thought a greater thing to make a king than to be one, he hath attained a higher degree above being, himself, one single preacher, in doing that whereby, now and in future time, he may contribute to the making of many.

These are some instances, and, blessed be God, it is to be hoped there are others, which show that *religio medici* is not always opprobrious, or a note of ignominy and reproach; and that "a beloved physician," on the *best* account, was not appropriate to the first age. That calling gives very great opportunity to a man of a serious spirit, of doing good to men's souls; and I know it hath been improved by some, to discourse and to pray with their dying patients; and when their art could not immortalize their bodies, they did all that in them lay for the saving their immortal souls. And this, I have reason to think, was a great part of the practice of this worthy man.

In the proper business of this calling, he sincerely studied the good of mankind; endeavouring to his utmost, to lengthen out their time in this world, in order to their further preparation for the other. And herein his skill was not unequal to his sincerity; nor his charity to his skill: for being applied to, upon no former acquaintance, when the cases of extreme illness and extreme poverty have met together,

[1] Dr. Grew.

he hath most cheerfully embraced the opportunity of doing such good; declaring, he was ready as well to serve the poor, when he was to receive nothing, as the rich, from whom he might expect the largest fees. His visits have been *there* repeated with equal constancy and diligence. He equally rejoiced in the success of such endeavours, whereof he had no other recompence than the satisfaction of having relieved the distressed and the miserable: and of such some do survive him, to whom the remembrance of his name is still grateful and dear.

Nor were the great advantages lost, which he had gained for the instructing a congregation,—had the state of things, and his judgment, concurred thereto. For they eminently appeared to such as had the privilege of living under his roof, and of partaking in the instructions which his great acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures enabled him to give them from time to time; which, together with his daily fervent prayers and holy conversation, made his family as a well-ordered and a "watered garden," compared with the "howling wildernesses" of too many others.

But in all my conversation with him, nothing was more observable or more grateful to me, than his pleasant and patient expectation of the blessed state which he now possesses; the mention whereof would make joy sparkle in his eye and clothe his countenance with cheerful looks; accompanied with such tokens of serenity and a composed temper of mind, as showed and signified submission, with an unreluctant willingness, to wait for that time which the wisdom and goodness of God should judge seasonable for his removal out of a world, which he loved not; nor yet could disaffect from any sense of its unkindness to *him*, but only from the prospect he had of a better: which made me think him a fit example of what is treated of in the foregoing discourse.

THE WORTHY DR. GREW'S ACCOUNT OF THIS HIS EXCELLENT BROTHER-IN-LAW.

Dr. Henry Sampson was the son and heir of a religious gentleman, Mr. William Sampson, of South Leverton, in Nottinghamshire: and nephew to those two eminent linguists, Mr. John and Mr. Samuel Vicars, the joint authors of the *Decapla on the Psalms*. In his minority, he was first under the government of his most virtuous mother; upon her remarriage, of his father-in-law, the very Rev. Dr. Obadiah Grew, of Coventry: by whom he was committed, at the age of fifteen, to the tutorage of Mr. William Moses, then fellow, and some time after, the learned and worthy master of Pembroke Hall, in Cambridge; under whom his proficiency was such, as preferred him to be the moderator of his year. So soon as he was of sufficient standing, he was chosen fellow of the same hall; and, not long after, had one of the best livings in the gift of the college bestowed upon him; namely, that of Framlingham, in Suffolk. Here he was, when he published that correct edition of the learned Thesis of Mr. Thomas Parker, entitled, *Methodus Divinæ Gratiæ*, etc.; a golden book, with a golden epistle of his own prefixed to it; both of them having a great deal of weight in a little room. While he continued here, he made several visits to Coventry, where he often preached for the doctor, his father-in-law, with great acceptation, as well as among his own people: in both which places, his name is as a precious ointment and his memory had in honour unto this day. Upon the restoration of King Charles, being obliged to leave his people, he resolved, as well because he was never ordained as for some other reasons, to qualify himself for the practice of physic: in order whereunto, having visited several universities famous for medicine abroad, he stayed, first at Padua, and then at Leyden, for some time: in the latter of which, he became very well acquainted with that eminent person, the Lord Chief Justice St. John, who bore a singular respect to him as long as he

lived. Having here taken his degree, he returned home and settled in this city: where also, for order's sake, he entered himself of the College of Physicians, as an honorary fellow; among the members whereof, he justly obtained the repute of being substantially learned in all the parts of his profession. Besides other improvements he aimed at, he laid up a considerable treasure of observations made of diseased bodies dissected with his own hand. Nor did he lose any of his spare hours, as appears by many historical papers, relating to theology, left behind him; all which, though they have been long suppressed, partly through his own great modesty, and partly the infirmities of his latter years, which permitted him to finish but few, if any of them; yet is it hoped, that some of both kinds may ere long see the light. His reading and speculation were ever in order unto action; by which means, as he became, under all relations, in every station of his life, desirable and exemplary unto others; so he enjoyed the happiness of continual peace within. And as he lived, he died; his last hours being very composed, and concluding with that εὐθανασία, *euthanasia*, for which he had often prayed.

A DISCOURSE

RELATING TO THE

MUCH LAMENTED DEATH, AND SOLEMN FUNERAL

OF

OUR INCOMPARABLE AND MOST GRACIOUS

QUEEN MARY.

OF MOST BLESSED MEMORY.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

RACHEL, LADY RUSSEL.

Madam,

I can be at no loss for inducements to prefix your ladyship's name to this discourse. I know the subject is grateful to you; and if I only give you the occasion hereby of revolving in your mind this sublime context, you will entertain yourself from it with more enlarged and exalted thoughts, than this discourse, especially confined within so narrow limits, can suggest.

And your ladyship knows so much of the incomparable Queen, that you can the more easily believe the rest. I reckon you, madam, a great frequenter of that assembly above, to which she is now adjoined. You have, besides the greater attractives that are common to all serious Christians, a very peculiar one, to draw your mind often thither. A joint root with you is there by transplantation; and a noble branch from you both, and in whom two illustrious families meet, is, under your care, shooting upwards also. All indeed that have true honour for him, will earnestly covet he may be long serviceable to the most valuable purposes in this world; and that, by the blessing of heaven upon his approaching nuptials,—with one from whom may be expected all that so sweet and tender a bud, now beginning to open, can promise,—he may, in due time, spread forth many branches, that may flourish here; but it is to be hoped he will be found to have a greater mind than can be confined to so low and little a thing as this earth is.

The thought may much the better be digested, that terrestrial nuptials will some time end in funerals, if once, by God's prescribed methods, it can be made certain to us also, that those funerals shall end in celestial triumphs.

Your ladyship's eyes—which better serve for heaven than earth—being observably much directed upward, will give aim and direction to *theirs* who depend upon you, to look the same way; and withal draw down from thence continual blessings upon yourself and them: which is the serious desire and hope of,

Madam,

Your Ladyship's most obedient,

And obliged humble servant,

J. H.

A DISCOURSE

RELATING TO THE

MUCH LAMENTED DEATH, AND SOLEMN FUNERAL

OF

QUEEN MARY.

HEBREWS xii. 23.

"AND TO THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT."

Let me invite back your eye to the foregoing words, that are in nearer connexion with these:

"But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels;"[1]

"To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."[2]

We have had this last week a public solemnity, that was becomingly great and magnificent, upon a sad and mournful occasion,—the last act of a doleful scene that hath lasted many weeks. You know I have taken notice to you, my usual hearers, of the first and saddest, the leading part in this tragedy, once and again; nor would I have this last to pass us without some instructive observation and remark. It will the more instruct us, the less it detains us; or if only taking a due—not, I mean, a slight and too hasty, but yet a transient—notice of it, we be prompted by it to look forward

[1] Verse 22. [2] Verse 23.

from what was in its own kind most deservedly great, to what is incomparably greater in a more excellent kind.

In such a funeral solemnity, for so great and excellent a personage, there is what may most fitly entertain a while; there is not that which ought *finally* to terminate a wise and a judicious eye.

Honours done to the memory of great persons deceased, have, by the wisdom of all nations, been counted decencies, and even debts; when especially the deceased have been some time, and might have been much longer, public blessings: then indeed it is that such rites are most fitly, as they are usually, called '*justa.*'

But we are too prone to be taken only with the mere pomp of such spectacles, and,—which is the infirmity of our too degenerate spirits,—to be wholly possessed with fanciful ideas; as *those*[1] were intimated to be, which were from a spectacle of the same common kind, though on a very diverse occasion,—by that elegant expression, μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας; such as do but amuse our imagination awhile, but must of course vanish, and cannot stay long with us. But we need that somewhat greater, and too latent to strike our eye, should another way enter, and teach our mind; making such impressions there, as may claim an abode, and that ought to remain and dwell with us.

You read of a very solemn funeral in Genesis.[2] The whole country into which the march was made, was amused at the state and greatness of that mournful cavalcade, wherein it is said[3] "there were chariots, and horsemen, even a very great company."

That which you have, many of you, so lately seen, and no doubt all of you heard of, was a most august funeral solemnity; such as whereof less concerned foreign spectators might say, as the Canaanites by mistake did of that,[4]—"This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians."

They were indeed anciently the most celebrated mourners

[1] Acts xxv. 23. [2] Gen. l. [3] Verse 9. [4] Verse 11.

for such as died from amongst them, in all the world, in respect of their funeral rites, and of their monuments for the dead,[1] of which they are said to have taken more care than of the habitations of the living; accounting these they were to inhabit only a short time, but those they reckoned their ἀϊδίους οἴκους, their 'eternal habitations:' an imagination, which how wild soever it were of the habitations of souls—which *only* could be supposed capable of being pleased with them—yet implied their belief of their immortality, whereof some have groundlessly thought them the first assertors.[2]

But the Canaanites were, as was intimated, mistaken in apprehending that to be chiefly an Egyptian mourning. The true Israelites, those that were such indeed, were the true, concerned mourners. The father of Israel was dead,—as now with us, the *mother;* a political, though not a natural, nor merely an economical one: a mother; not in the narrower and more minute, but in the larger and most noble sense; not of a single family only, but of nations.

The Egyptians assisted to make up the show in that mourning, but were probably the *prepared,* as their posterity were the *active,* instruments of the slavery and misery of that people with whom they were now seeming sharers in lamentation.

Ours was a mourning not less grievous than theirs, nor more grievous than just to the English nation; that is, to whom the soil and the genius are together native,—that are not of an *Egyptian spirit;* unto which, as things happen to its power or to its impotency, there is a radical innate disposition, either to make slaves or to be such. There is a sort of people, as was once said, born to slavery; to whom it is a birthright. They have it in their natures; and no other state,—as he most aptly spake,—is agreeable or 'becoming' to them. *Quos non decet esse nisi servos.*[3] They know not what to do with liberty, any more than that silly creature that used to haunt the dunghill, with the

[1] Diod. Sic. lib. 1. [2] Herod. *Euterp.* [3] Plin. *Paneg.*

pearl. Therefore they can but suitably value the restorers and assertors of it. No irons can be heavier or less tolerable to them, than a generous and a Christian state of freedom. Therefore if none else will do them the kind office to put them into gentler shackles, they grow so unnaturally cruel as to shackle themselves, in the ignoblest sort of bondage. "They are held in the cords of their own sins,"[1] and 'make the chain, whereby they are to be dragged.'[2]

Brutish appetites and inclinations are to them severer taskmasters, than it can ever be in their power to become to others. They can *themselves*, at the utmost, but domineer over other men's externals; but these have subdued their wills, and tyrannize in their very minds.

Thus it is with them in relation to their governing and their being governed; and their policy and religion come both out of the same mint.

To them this season of sorrow is a time of festivity and laughter; who, when they have suffered a more monstrous transformation themselves, can easily turn the "house of mourning" into that "of mirth."[3] The wise man tells us what sort of people they are, whose heart is in this latter house; and what is to be thought of such mirth and laughter.[4] And indeed without a serious repentance—by which men do 'resipiscere,' or "become wise"—theirs is like to prove the sardonic laughter, a certain prelude to death and ruin.

But it is to be hoped, this sort of men do dwindle into a not much regardable paucity. The current of the nation runs against them, which must turn and constrain them to fall in with it. For,—

We had upon the late sad occasion a 'Panegyris.' We find that word in the introductive part of the text, and though it is more commonly applied to a multitude gathered on other occasions, it disagrees not to that orderly great concourse on that mournful occasion; a 'general assembly,' that

[1] Prov. v. 22. [2] Sen. Trag. [3] Eccles. vii. 4. [4] Chap. ii. 2.

is, a national one, met then on purpose to mourn; a nation assembled, and mourning in their representative. It was decent it should be so; a loss so national, so general a sorrow, were with no congruity otherwise to be represented and expressed. Our mourning was therefore by all the Estates of the Kingdom, the head only mourning with greater and more decent majesty in retirement, or being, as is usual in solemn mournings, hid and covered on that day. So was the whole legislature concerned in that sorrow, as if it were ordained by statute, or as if our mourning were as that for an excellent Prince also,[1] by "an ordinance in" our "Israel;" and as if our tears and lamentations were, as before they were by merit, to be also made due by law! Death marched in state and triumph that day; the king of terrors took the throne, and filled that part which it had made vacant; having plucked away from thence not only so bright an ornament, but so glorious an instrument, in our government; and all the orders of the realm, as captives, attended the chariot of the conqueror. England had lost its 'delight,' its 'pleasant comeliness,' and even 'half its soul.' Nothing could correspond to such a case but a national groan, as of a half-expiring kingdom, ready almost to breathe its last and give up the ghost.

It must be confessed our just tribute to the memory of our admirable Queen can never be said to be fully paid; nor can this discourse leave out occasional reflections that may be of this import. But my present design is to endeavour our minds may be drawn upwards, and to make that improvement of this most instructive providence unto which this chosen text will direct. Not to entertain you with her character and praises, (for it is the same thing to characterize and to praise her,) that part is performed in divers excellent discourses which I have read, as I believe many of you have, and I hope with fruit as well as approbation; and—as there is cause—with great admiration of the Divine goodness that

[1] 2 Chron. xxxv. 25.

so illustriously shone forth in her, and that vouchsafed so long to entrust the people of England with so rare a jewel, whose lustre was yet exceeded by its real virtues. By which also we may make our estimate of the displeasure wherewith it is so soon withdrawn and caught away from us, so as to entertain the age—as our divine Herbert *says*—with

"A mirth but opened, and shut up again."

"A burning and a shining light;" for so she also was in a true sense and in her proper sphere, in the light whereof we rejoiced but a season.

But every such providence hath its dark side, and its bright. View it downward, as it looks upon us who remain beneath, and we behold "blackness, and darkness, and a horrible tempest." Such a state of things we may fear our Queen hath left unto us who stay below, while we do so. But look we upon it upwards, whither she is ascended and whither we are professedly tending, and are in some sort come, "if we be followers of them, who through faith and patience have inherited the promises;" and we find it is to "Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." And hither,—that we may fetch instruction out of terror, "out of the eater meat," and life out of death—let us bend and apply ourselves.

We have had a mournful sad solemnity and assembly, though decently pompous and great; England's glory clad in sables, and glittering in a cloud. But now let us lift up our eye, and endeavour it may penetrate through this darkness, and behold the glorious spectacle which this context presents us with.

Funeral solemnities, even for pious and holy persons, and that were of greatest use in the world, are dull and gloomy spectacles, if they are only considered in their retrospection, without prospect; or if they only solemnize their exit out of

this world of ours, but be understood to have no reference to their ascent and entrance into the regions of immortality and bliss above. And, without this, we see ourselves outdone by the Egyptians themselves, with whom their funeral apparatus had reference to a subsequent immortality.

These words are allusive, and promiscuously refer *partly* to things known and famous among the Greeks, but are more *principally* accommodate to these Christian Israelites, or Hebrews, to whom they are writ;—and, in a scheme of speech familiar and well known to them, have respect to their passage out of Egypt,—as the third and fourth chapters of this epistle also have,—towards the land of their promised inheritance; whereof the remains of their venerable ancestor and head, holy Jacob or Israel, had by Divine instinct and direction, in that mentioned solemn funeral procession, been conveyed before, to take a sort of typical and prophetical prepossession of it for them.

They are in the whole a figure, an allegory, which is expounded in Gal.[1] In their way to their terrestrial Canaan, this people came to Mount Sinai,—the emblem of their Jewish church state,—under rigorous severities, which they were to pass from; and so shall we. The text expresses what they were come and were tending to, the representation whereof hath a double reference; intermediate—to the state and constitution of the Christian church; and final—to the heavenly state; the former being both a *resemblance*, and some *degree*, of the latter.

"Ye are come," saith he, "to Mount Sion," the seat of the sacred temple, the Shechinah, the habitation of the Divine presence; not ambulatory, as the tabernacle was while they were journeying through the wilderness, but the fixed residence of the eternal King, where the order of worship was to be continued to the fulness of time; as afterwards in the Christian church it was to be permanent and unchanged to the end of time; and in the heavenly state unalterable and

[1] Chap. iii.

eternal: and here, in opposition to the case at Mount Sinai, where the people were to stay *beneath* the Mount (whereas they were to *go up* to the house of God on Mount Sion) they are now to ascend, and be higher than heaven;[1] as their glorious Head and Lord is said to be.[2]

"To the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem:" to signify the vicinity wherein God will have his people be to him, as Jerusalem was to Sion,—their houses and dwellings being near to his own, the city to the temple. And this passage may also look back upon their former state; whereas they had heretofore nothing but wilderness, they had now a city.[3] To which that also agrees, Heb. xi. 16. Their earlier progenitors were wanderers and strangers even in Canaan itself, but now God had prepared for them a city in the heavenly Canaan, as before he did in the earthly. But lest their minds should stay in the external sign, he lets them know he means the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the Christian church, which was the kingdom of heaven begun; and heaven itself, as being that kingdom in its final and consummate state.

"To an innumerable company of angels," *μυριάσιν*; which though in the singular it signifies a definite number, being here put plurally, may well be understood to signify indefinitely a numberless multitude: or whereas some selected squadrons might only attend the solemnity of giving the law at Mount Sinai, here is the whole heavenly host, whose stated office it is to guard the church below, and worship the Majesty of heaven above.

"To the general assembly," the *πανήγυρις*, the glorious *consessus* of all orders of blessed spirits; which as it may be supposed constant at all times, so is as supposable to be more frequented and solemn at some; and whither any may resort, as quick as the glance of an eye or a thought; and perhaps do, at appointed seasons, so as to make more solemn appearances before the throne of God, as the laws and usages

[1] Ἀνώτεροι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Chrys. in loc. [2] Heb. vii. 26.
[3] Ἐκεῖ ἔρημος, ἐνταῦθα πόλις, Chrys. in loc.

of that blessed world shall require. And we may well understand here an allusion to the appointed times at which there was a resort from all parts of Judea to Jerusalem; and, as in the Christian church, are, at set seasons, more numerous and solemn assemblies. Here may also be an allusion to the *panathenaica*, the more general conventions of all the people of Athens upon some solemn occasions, which were wont to be called πανήγυρες. These can be referred to but as faint resemblances and shadows (whether they were the Jewish or the Grecian assemblies) of this universal convention, that fills the vast expanse of heaven; in comparison whereof not only this little earth of ours, but the whole *vortex* to which it belongs, can be considered but as a very minute spot or point. The inhabitants that people those immense, pure and bright regions, in their grand stated solemn assembly, make the term to which holy souls, ascending from among us, are continually coming. And here with what ineffable pleasure must these pure celestial intelligences, all filled with light, wisdom, life, benignity, love, and joy, converse with one another; behold, reverence, love, worship, and enjoy their sovereign Lord, displaying his glory perpetually before them, and making his rich immense goodness diffuse itself, and flow in rivers of pleasure most copiously among them!

"The church of the first-born written in heaven." These all constitute but one church, of whatsoever orders those blessed spirits are. And they are all said to be first-born, the church here meant consisting only of such in whom the Divine life, or the holy living image of God hath place; they having all the privileges which did belong to the first-born, —the inheritance, the principality, and the priesthood: for all God's sons are also heirs.[1] And they are all made "kings, and priests,"[2] having all their crowns, which they often cast down before the supreme King; and their employment being perpetual oblation of praise, adoration, and all possible acknowledgments to him. They are all of excellent dignity,

[1] Romans viii. 17.

[2] Rev. i. 6.

and every one enrolled; so that none have a place there by oversight, casualty, or intrusion. We must here understand an allusion to what citizens need not be told,—the known custom of registering such as were *civitate donati*, or made free.

"And to God the Judge of all." This may have reference to that office of the judge in the Olympic concertations, to whom it belonged to determine who were victors, and to whom the garlands or crowns were justly due. Here the privilege is, that they whose cause is to be tried are sure of righteous judgment, and that they may approach the enthroned Majesty of heaven itself. None of them are denied liberty of access to the throne of glory above, as in the Christian church none are to the throne of grace below.

"And to the spirits of just men made perfect." This shows they all make but one church, even such spirits as have "dwelt in flesh" being received into the communion of those whose dwelling never was with flesh. And, in the mean time, those that yet continue in these low earthly stations, as soon as the principles of the Divine life have place in them, belong and are related to that glorious community; for they are said to be already "come" thereto, and all together compose but one family. For there is but one "paterfamilias," of whom "the whole family in heaven and earth is said to be named."[1]

Now for the encouragement of Christians unto a faithful perseverance, through all the difficulties of this their present conflicting, imperfect state, is this glorious representation made of the blessed issue their labours and sufferings shall have at last; whither they shall be gathered at the finishing of their course, and how Godlike, how worthy of Himself the end shall be, into which He will run up all things, when the state of probation and preparation is over with His intelligent creatures, and the stable, permanent eternal state comes to take place; which, because it is final, can admit no more changes, and because it is perfect, can no more need

[1] Eph. iii. 15.

any. Hither Christians are to come, and in some sense the sincere are said to be come already.

And now upon this part of the term of their access, namely, that they "are come to the spirits of the just made perfect," we are to stay awhile, and shall consider,—

First. The perfection the spirits of the just do finally arrive to in their *future* state.

Secondly. In what sense, sincere Christians, in their *present* state, can be said to be come to them who are so made perfect.

For the former of these, we may easily admit this being "made perfect," to be an *agonistical* phrase, as some of great note and worth have expounded it; and unto which that in the beginning of this chapter, of "running the race set before us,"—as much as to say, the *way* laid out between the lines on each hand,—doth plainly lead us. But it should hereupon be remote from us to think, that a mere relative dignity or any external honours are the things we must principally understand to be conferred, or which these *adepti* must be now thought to have obtained. It is a real, inward, subjective perfection, by which they all become most excellent creatures, that must be chiefly meant.

Perfection, taken in the moral sense, doth, in the language of the Holy Scriptures, contain a threefold gradation.

I. At the lowest, sincerity; as when our Saviour proposes to that querist, if he would be "perfect," to sell all he had, and give to the poor, "following Him," with the expectation of no other recompense but of a "treasure in heaven."[1] If a man's soul be not in a disposition to comport with such terms, upon a sufficient signification of our Lord's pleasure that he shall now do so; or if at any time this be the case, that he must either forego all this world, and even life itself, or else renounce Christ and Christianity; he is not yet in a right posture towards his last end. He hath not taken the Lord for his God, and best good; his heart more strongly adheres to this present world.

[1] Matt. xix. 21.

But if he have arrived hither, which is his first step,—resolving upon his true and right end, which he will supremely pursue against whatsoever competition of less valuable things, —he is now, in the lowest sense, "perfect," that is, a resolved thorough Christian.

II. An eminent improvement, greater maturity in Divine knowledge, and all other Christian virtues: as when the apostle, blaming the slower progress of the Christian Hebrews, that they were yet so "unskilful in the word of righteousness," and only capable of "milk, not the strong meat" fit for persons come to a more grown age, nor had "their senses as yet well exercised,"[1] etc., he exhorts them, leaving the first principles of the Christian doctrine, "to go on to perfection."[2]

III. The third is the consummate state of a Christian; so is a "perfect man" expounded by being "come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" that state, to which all gifts given by our ascended, conquering, crowned Redeemer; the whole gospel, the apostolate, the entire ministry, the whole frame and constitution of the Christian church, all evangelical truths and institutions, with whatsoever illuminations and influences we can suppose superadded to all these, have ultimate and final reference. And the state to which "all shall come,"[3] is this most perfect state, in respect whereof the apostle says of himself, that he had "not yet attained, nor was already perfect."[4]

I do not reckon the mere natural perfection, either of the inner or outer man, to be here necessarily excluded, but that the *moral* is chiefly intended; and of *that*, the ultimate consummative degrees;—still reserving room for such additions as will follow the final judgment.

And I doubt it is not enough considered, how much the felicity of the future state depends upon such perfection of the subject of it. Concerning the object of felicity, we are

[1] Chap. v. 13, 14.
[2] Chap. vi. 1.
[3] Eph. iv. 8—13.
[4] Phil. iii. 12.

agreed it can be no other than the blessed God himself, the all-comprehending Good, fully adequate to the highest and most enlarged reasonable desires. But the contemperation of our faculties to the holy, blissful object, is so necessary to our satisfying fruition, that without that we are no more capable thereof, than a brute of the festivities of a quaint oration, or a stone of the relishes of the most pleasant meats and drinks. That "meetness," which the apostle speaks of, "to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,"[1] is of no small importance to our participation itself.

We are too apt to fill our minds with ideas of a heaven made up of external, outside glories, forgetting we must have the "kingdom of God within us," hereafter in its *perfect*, as well as here in its *initial* state: a kingdom that consists in righteousness first, a universal holy rectitude of all our powers; then consequently in peace and joy.

The perfect cure of all the distempers of our spirits and a confirmed most perfectly happy temper, is of most absolute necessity to the blessedness of the heavenly state; and without it any imagined external glory will signify no more to our satisfaction, than rich and gorgeous apparel can give the desired content and ease to an ulcerous diseased body; or, as the moralist[2] speaks, a diadem to an aching head, a gay slipper to a pained foot, or a gold ring to a sore finger.

Let a soul be supposed actually adjoined to that glorious assembly and church above, that is yet unacquainted with God; strange and disaffected to him; alienated from the Divine life; still carnally minded; loving most, and looking back with a lingering eye towards, this present world and state of things; full of pride, haughtiness, and self-magnifying thoughts, of envy, wrath, hatred, contentiousness, of deceit, guilefulness, and dissimulation; filled with ravenous lusts and inordinate, insatiable desires after impossible things:—such a soul will only seem to have mistaken its way, place, state, and company, and can only be a fit associate for devils and

[1] Col. i. 12. [2] Plutarch.

infernal spirits. Its condition would be equally uneasy to itself and all about it; the outrage of its own lusts and passions would create to it a hell in the midst of heaven, and be to it as a thousand devils, both for wickedness and for torment.

But to give you a summary of this internal perfection of the spirits of just men in their most perfect state, I cannot give you a fuller and more comprehensive one than is expressed in those few words, "We shall be like Him; for we shall see him as he is:"[1] where are two things conjoined, that together express the perfect state of these blessed spirits,—likeness to God, and the vision of him.

And these two are so connected as to admit of a twofold reference each to other; either that this likeness to God be considered as preparative for the vision of him, and so that the latter words be considered as an argument of the former; namely, that because it is designed we shall live in the perpetual vision of God, it is therefore necessary we should be like him, without which we can be no way capable of such a sight or of beholding so bright a glory: or else, that the vision of God be perpetually productive of this likeness to him; and so that the latter words be understood not only to contain an argument, whence we may conclude this likeness *must* be, but also to express the immediate cause by which it *is*. As the form of expression will admit either of these references, so I doubt not the nature of the thing will require that we take them in both. There could be no such vision of God as is here meant, if there were not some previous likeness to him, in our former state. And when, in our final state, we are first admitted to that beatific glorious vision, by that means, we may reasonably understand, will ensue the perfection of that likeness.

Whereof also it is to be considered that 'vision,'—which spoken of the mind is knowledge,—must not only be taken for a cause, but a part; for the image of God is at first "renewed,"

[1] 1 John iii. 2.

and with equal reason must be supposed at last perfected, "in knowledge."[1]

This image or likeness of God therefore, if we consider the natural order of working upon an intelligent subject, must, as to that part of it which hath its seat in the mind or understanding faculty, be caused by the immediate irradiation of the Divine light and glory upon *that*, and be the cause of the rest.

But both together are the inherent subjective perfection of these blessed spirits of the just, and comprehend all that belongs to this their moral perfection; the latter being itself also virtually comprehended in the former.

The vision of God therefore, or their perfect knowledge of him with whom they must ever have most of all to do, as the principal object of their fruition and enjoyment, must be the primary and the leading thing in this their perfection; for no doubt it is that perfection which directly concerns their ultimate satisfaction and blessedness which is here intended; with which their eternal employment is most conjunct and complicated, as we shall after see. They enjoy and adore the same blessed object at once; and in doing the one, do the other.

And besides the knowledge of him, there must be by his beams and in his light[2] the perfect knowledge of all that it is needful or requisite they should know; without which, since all their enjoyments in the heavenly state must be in their first rise intellectual, it would be impossible they should ever perfectly enjoy anything at all. And that this perfection of just men's spirits is intended to be summarily comprehended in the perfection of their knowledge, is more than intimated by that series of discourse which we find in 1 Cor. The apostle,[3] comparing the imperfection of our present with the perfection of our future state, sums up all in this: that "we know now but in part," and that then "we shall know as we are known." But the perfection of this knowledge he seems more to state

[1] Col. iii. 10. [2] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [3] 1 Cor. xiii. 9—12.

in the manner of knowing, than in the extent and compass of the things known. That in this latter respect it may admit of increase, they cannot doubt who consider the finite capacity of a created mind, and the mighty advantages we shall have for continual improvement, both from the clear discovery of things in that bright and glorious light, and from the receptiveness of our enlarged and most apprehensive minds. But that state can admit of no culpable ignorance, nor of any that shall more infer infelicity than include sin.

Therefore now to speak more distinctly:

We take this perfection of the spirits of the just to be principally meant of their moral perfection, such as excludes all sin and all misery; as morality comprehends and connects together sanctity,—the goodness of the means, and felicity,—the goodness of the end: the former most directly, but most certainly, inferring the latter. If therefore we say this is their sinless perfection, we say all that the case requires.

In that it is said to be the perfection of *spirits*, it must indeed suppose all that natural perfection which belongs to such a sort of creatures, *as such*, in their own kind. But inasmuch as the specification is added, "of the just," it is their moral perfection or most perfectly holy rectitude, from which their blessedness is inseparable, that seems ultimately intended.

But now whereas this their ultimate perfection hath been said to be virtually contained and summed up in knowledge, we are hereupon to consider how this may appear to be a complete summary of all such perfection. And nothing can more evidently appear, if you join together the true matter or object, and right manner or nature of this knowledge.

1. The true and proper object of it must be, not *omne scibile*, but whatsoever they can be obliged or concerned to know, or that is requisite to their duty and felicity; all that lies within their compass, as they are creatures that in such a distinct sphere or in their own proper order are to correspond to the ends of their creation; that is, to glorify the Author of

their beings and be happy in him. Infinite knowledge belongs not to them; is not competent to their nature; nor necessary either to their employment or to their blessedness in the heavenly state. Whatsoever knowledge is requisite to these ends, will be included in this their final perfection.

It is, by the way, to be observed how this matter is expressed,—"made perfect;" which signifies our arriving to this perfection out of an imperfect state. We were created with an original perfection, sufficient to a state of probation. By our apostasy we became sinfully imperfect; "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."[1] We have been put upon a new trial by our Redeemer. Their perfection, who have run out their course, is, by the grace of God and by his methods, restored and improved to its just pitch. They are now, their trial being over, set in a consummate rectitude towards the ends of their creation; and herein are endowed with all the knowledge they need, namely, of such things as, in reference to those ends, they can any way be concerned with.

With the blessed God himself they are most of all concerned, for him they are eternally to adore and enjoy. Therefore that their perfection should be virtually included in Divine knowledge, is congruous to the state of their case and to the language of the Holy Scriptures, which expresses their most perfect state by the vision of God;[2] which phrase is not borrowed from the sight of the eye and transferred to that of the mind, at random, or without most probable design. It most aptly signifies the great facility of this knowledge, that it is not toilsome; there is little labour in it, it is not such as requires great pains; it is but intuition; not a cautious, wary ratiocination, wherein we use to be very solicitous, lest we draw any irregular or untrue consequences. We do very easily and on the sudden, without suspicion or fear of error, only behold what is offered to

[1] Romans iii. 23.

[2] In the mentioned 1 John iii. 2, and Matt. v. 8, Heb. xii. 14, etc.

our view. This is a great perfection of mind with these blessed spirits, to be capable of knowing the greatest things so easily and so soon,—"to know by seeing." And their aptness hereto is a moral perfection, for the clearness of the discovery infers their greater obligation to attend, and not to divert from what shall cost them so little. The blessed God's manifestation of himself, in that brightest and most glorious light, is not only evidently supposed,—for "in his light only can we see light,"[1]—but it is emphatically expressed in the before-mentioned text,[2] of seeing face to face; which signifies, on his part, gracious vouchsafement, his offering his blessed face to view; that he hides it not, nor turns it away, (as here sometimes he doth,) in just displeasure. And his face means even his most conspicuous glory, such as, in this state of mortality, it would be mortal to us to behold; for no man,—not so divine a man as Moses himself,—could "see his face and live." And it signifies, on their part who are thus made perfect, their applying and turning their face towards his; namely, that they see not casually or by fortuitous glances, but eye to eye, by direct and most voluntary intuition, which therefore, on their part, implies moral perfection; the will, directing and commanding the eye, and upon inexpressible relishes of joy and pleasure forbidding its diversion, holds it steady and intent. Here our ignorance of God is culpable, being voluntary, not "liking to retain him in our knowledge."[3] There our knowledge is inculpable and sinless, being chosen, purposed, and always, principally, for its most proper ends,—the perfect adoration and fruition of the blessed object we so fixedly behold and so earnestly covet to know.

It is also fit to be noted, that the very fruition of the blessed God itself, which the Holy Scripture includes in our vision of him, is not only our very blessedness itself, but it is our duty too. It is a thing enjoined us, and comprehended in that first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 12. [3] Romans i. 28.

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and might, and mind;" which, who can perfectly do without a complacential acquiescence and final rest of their will in him, as the best, the most perfect, and all-comprehending Good? And hereupon, though we are wont to distinguish our *glorifying* God and *enjoying* him, they are most manifestly coincident, and but notionally distinct. For in this our fruitive acquiescence of will in him stands our highest veneration, our most practical, most significant acknowledgment and testimony concerning him, as the highest, the most complete, the most absolutely perfect good,—in that we seek no further, but take up our final rest in him. This is to give him the proper glory of his Godhead, to "glorify him as God." And therefore this, being the fullest sense of that great and summary command, it is only a commanding us to be happy: as, on the other hand, the misery of the intelligent creature is his greatest and most injurious *iniquity*, an aversion of will from the blessed God, a testimony against him, as none of the best good, and the greatest indignity which created nature can put upon him, who is goodness itself. Thus then is the knowledge or vision of God, even as it is fruitive, a moral perfection. But the divine knowledge, more at large, of these holy spirits, though it be principally conversant about God as its noblest object, excludes not their applying their minds to other objects too, according to their concernment with them. And yet,

2. How aptly this perfection is included in such knowledge will further appear, if you consider the manner of knowing, or the special nature and kind of this vision or knowledge; namely, that it is not that slight, ineffectual, merely notional, insipid knowledge, which unregenerate minds are now wont to have of the most evident truths; namely, *that*, for instance,—That God is the most excellent, the most perfect, the most desirable, as well as the most adorable good; which knowledge, because it answers not the *true end* of divine knowledge, is called ignorance: whereupon they are said to be "alienated from the life of God, through

the ignorance that is in them."[1] But that ignorance is paraphrased by "blindness of heart;" that is, a most perfectly voluntary and chosen ignorance, founded in aversion of will; and elsewhere,[2] by a "refusing to know God," a saying to him, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."[3] Whereupon "the light that is" in such is said to be very "darkness," and then "how great is that darkness!"[4]

This knowledge or vision, now in perfection, is most deeply and inwardly penetrative, efficacious, and transforming; admits a light which spreads and transfuses itself through the whole soul. So it is, at first, in every truly regenerate spirit; whereby such a one is begotten into the Divine likeness, His image is impressed upon it, which, as hath been noted, is said to be "renewed in knowledge;"[5] so that, as by solemn message to the sons of men, God is declared to be pure light.[6] "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And as he is the original, the paternal light, the Father of lights;[7] so they that are born of him are said to be light itself, and the children of light. "Ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."[8] And they are therefore said, "as the sons of God, to shine as lights,"[9] or required to do so; for the words bear either form. This so energetical, efficacious light, is, in the mentioned texts, manifestly intended to connote holiness; as it doth also, in Rom. xiii.;[10] which the antithesis there shows, "works of darkness and armour of light:" and in many other places.

Accordingly the whole, even of practical religion and godliness, is in the Holy Scriptures expressed by the knowledge of God.[11] It is signified to be in its own nature sanctifying, and inconsistent with prevailing sin,[12] in which they that live are therefore said to be destitute of it; who are also upon the

[1] Eph. iv. 18. [2] Jer. ix. 3—6. [3] Job xxi. 14. [4] Matt. vi. 23.
[5] Col. iii. 10. [6] 1 John i. 5. [7] James i. 17. [8] Eph. v. 8.
[9] Phil. ii. 15. [10] Rom. xiii. 12. [11] 2 Chron. xxx. 22.
[12] 1 Cor. xv. 34.

same account said not to have had any sight of God.[1] "He that sinneth" (the word is ὁ κακοποιῶν, a doer or worker of sin,) "hath not seen God." The light which this vision of God receives, must much more, in the perfected spirits of the just, be supposed so prevalent and victorious as quite to have chased away and expelled all remainders of this impure darkness. Every such spirit is therefore become as it were an orb of purest, most operative, and lively light, an intellectual and a self-actuating sun, full of fervour and motive power, besides mere light. Whereupon, whatsoever this light and knowledge discovers it is *fit* for such a soul to be, it *is*, and *whatsoever is* fit for it to do, it can never fail to do it.

Therefore the making of such spirits perfect must be understood, in greatest part, to consist in restoring the order of their faculties towards each other; which was broken by the apostasy to that degree, and they so debilitated and become so languid, so impotent and enfeebled, that neither could the one faculty lead nor the other follow. Whence light,—even about the most practical and the most important matters imaginable,—true notions, right sentiments, signified no more to command, to govern, to form and direct the inclinations and motions of the soul, than if, as to all its sentiments about these matters, you did put *false* instead of *true*, *wrong* instead of *right*, most absurd, most impossible instead of most congruous, most necessary. Take, for instance, the idea of God; let it be supposed to comprehend—as every one grants it doth, whether he acknowledge his existence or no—all conceivable, all possible excellencies; that it means an infinite, eternal, ever-living, self-subsisting being, most perfectly intelligent, wise, true, holy, righteous, powerful, and blessed; the original of life, being, and blessedness to the creation, according to the several kinds, natures, and capacities of his creatures; the supreme and sovereign Lord of all, to whom it belongs to govern and dispose of what he hath made; of most immense and abounding goodness and benignity; most bountiful to the indigent, compassionate to

[1] 3 John 11.

the miserable, reconcilable to the guilty, propitious to the penitent; most complacently kind, with highest delight, to the holy and the good; severe only to the obstinately impenitent and implacable, that will by no means or methods be reclaimed:—

Take we, again, from hence the measures by which we are to judge what ought to be the dispositions and deportments of his reasonable creatures towards him; that they be entirely composed and made up of love, reverence, humility, dependence, devotedness, subjection, gratitude, and adoration. And suppose we that in the theory, this be, as it generally is, admitted and acknowledged as the just and most regular consequence of the former:—

And let us again suppose, that we being made after his image, which in the natural part remains and is still common to mankind, and as to the moral part, is restored in all that are regenerate and born of God,—that therefore we ought to love universally all mankind, to wish and do well to them, as to ourselves; and no more to injure any man, than we would destroy, pull in pieces, or offer violence to our own life and being: and that we ought, with a more peculiar delectation, to embrace and love all holy and good men, without other distinction, than as any appear more to excel in goodness:—

Our light about these things is so clear; they are so little disputable, and so difficult it is to form any argument to the contrary; that few ever set themselves, by any explicit or formed thoughts, to oppose or contend against them. It is not, at least not generally, so much as attempted to disprove them, or assert contrary principles in opposition to them. Therefore that the dispositions and common practice of men do so little agree with these principles, is not that their notions are herein doubtful, but spiritless; their light is not uncertain, but weak and impotent. And hereupon their knowledge signifies as little to its proper end, as if their apprehensions touching these things were none at all, or quite contrary to what they are.

They as much neglect and slight the blessed God, or decline to be concerned with him, as if they denied all the things of him which his idea contains; or as if they affirmed all the things of him, which it most directly excludes. They shun, they fly from him, as if they thought him the worst of beings, while they acknowledge him the best and most excellent good; disobey and affront him, as if they thought he had no right to rule them, while they confess him the sovereign Lord of all the world: and steer their course both towards him, and one another, in as direct repugnancy to his rules, as if they thought them all reversed; and that the most opposite system of laws and precepts were given them, by some undoubted authority, to regulate all their practice!

It would amaze a thinking man that all this should be so! That intelligent creatures, that the reasonable, living, immortal spirits of men should be sunk to so low a pitch of degeneracy and vileness! But much more, that it being so apparently thus, it should be so seldom reflected on; that men are not afraid of themselves; that they appear not as so many frightful monsters, each in their own eyes! That they consider not, 'What are these faculties for? Why have I such notions of truth in my mind? Why have I a will whereby to choose, resolve, act, and be accordingly? What a distorted misshapen creature is this soul of mine! Everything in me running counter to right and fit!' Whatever hath thus fatally perverted all their powers, hath stupified them too; so as not only not to find fault, but to applaud and be well pleased with themselves for all this.

But now shall we not take our advantage from hence, to conceive and be enamoured of the rectitude, the amiableness of this most excellent state of the perfected spirits of the just? Now doth comely order succeed, instead of the most horrid deformity; distorted limbs are set right, the ligaments and connexion of the disjointed faculties to each other are restored; and whatsoever the enlightened mind suggests as fit and due, presently obtains. No complaint remains of

'seeing what is better and doing what is worse;' or that when good should be done, evil is present. There is nothing but perfect regularity, harmony, and agreement. All things move smoothly, and with constant equability and decorum. Right dictates of the leading faculty, and ready compliance of such as are to follow, make with them a perpetual, even, and uninterrupted course.

Likeness to God, therefore, in every other just respect, certainly ensues upon such preceding knowledge of him; for the kind and nature of that knowledge being, as it ought to be, powerful, vigorous, transforming of the whole soul, and the will ductile and compliant; agreeable impressions do most certainly take place. As *now* "beholding—we are changed,"[1] much more in that state where the injected Divine beams are so strong and vivid, and the receptive disposition so prompt, free, apt and facile.

Therefore to be made like God is to be "made perfect," according to the ultimate intendment of these words,—the vision or knowledge of God, in the heavenly state, being never intended for idle, ineffectual speculation; as this perfection is not otherwise to be understood than with reference to the ends we were made for; that we may be immediately capable of, and apt for, everlasting adoration and fruition of the blessed God, in a joint and most full consent and communion with the "general assembly," the whole community of all the blessed spirits besides, whose eternal work and delight this will be.

This likeness to God must yet be understood with exception to the Divine peculiarities, as hath been elsewhere shown[2]—whither we now refer, only to save the labour of transcribing: in respect of which peculiarities also there must be, on our part, a correspondency, that is, a likeness with allowance for necessary disagreement; as between a seal and the impression, where what is convex in the one is hollow in the other; and yet otherwise *like*, that is, correspondent to each other too. So the case is between the blessed God's all-sufficient fulness

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [2] Blessedness of the Righteous.

and our receptive emptiness; between his supremacy and our subjection. In respect to other things, common to him and us with the rest of those happy spirits that inhabit the regions of light and bliss,—spirituality itself, life and vigour, knowledge, wisdom, holiness, love, serenity, benignity, mercy, peace, and joy,—there is a nearer resemblance; these things passing under the same name with him and with us, but with the infinite inequality still of God and creature.

Now let us here give ourselves leave to pause a while, and contemplate those innumerable multitudes of pure and happy creatures, perfected or ever perfect spirits, that inhabit and replenish those ample spacious regions above; the vast, and to us, or to any thought of ours, immense and endless tracts of light and glory. Consider them every one composed and made up of lively light and love, as we are told "God is light"[1] and "God is love."[2] Consider them all as most intelligent and knowing creatures, even of the most profound and hidden mysteries that here were wont to perplex and puzzle the most inquisitive mind; ignorant of nothing, or apt to comprehend anything needful and pleasant to be known, or lawful to be inquired into; curious to know nothing useless or unlawful; most perfectly wise creatures, prudent sages, endowed with a self-governing wisdom, so as easily, without a vexatious solicitude and anxiety, but with a noble freedom, to order and command all their thoughts, appetitions, actions, and deportments towards God, themselves, and one another; so as never to be guilty of mistake or error in any motion of mind or will; never to omit anything in its season, or do anything out of season. Consider them whether in solemn assembly, (which may be stated and perpetual by successively appointed numbers for aught we know,) or diverting and retiring, or faring to and fro, as inclination, with allowance or command, may direct; yet *all* everywhere full of God, continually receiving the vital, satisfying, glorious communications of the everywhere present, self-manifesting Deity: all full of reverence, and most

[1] 1 John i. 5. [2] Chap. iv. 16.

dutiful love to the eternal Father of spirits, his eternal Son, and Spirit; all formed into perpetual, lowliest, and most grateful adoration, with highest delight and pleasure; all apprehensive of their depending state, and that they owe their all to that fulness which filleth all in all: every one in his own eyes a self-nothing, having no separate divided interest, sentiment, will, or inclination: every one continually self-consistent, agreeing with himself, ever free of all self-displeasure, never finding any cause or shadow of a cause for any angry self-reflection upon any undue thought or wish in that their present, perfect state, though not unmindful what they were or might have been, and ascribing their present state and stability to the grace of God, and dedicating their all to the praise and glory of that most free and unaccountable grace: all well assured and unsuspiciously conscious, with inexpressible satisfaction, of their acceptance with God, and placing with the fullest sense and relish their very life in his favour: all full of the most complacential benignity towards one another, counting each one's felicity his own; and every one's enjoyments being accordingly multiplied so many thousandfold, as he apprehends every one as perfectly pleased and happy as himself!

Let but any one recount these things with himself,—as he easily may, with far greater enlargement of thoughts, many more such things as these,—and he needs not be at a loss for a notion of this "perfect state" of the "spirits of the just."

And for further confirmation, as well as for a somewhat more distinct and explicit conception thereof, let it be moreover considered,—

What was the undertaking and design of our Redeemer, to whom the next words direct our eye: "And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling," etc. He was to be the restorer of these once lost apostate spirits, and besides reconciling them to God by his blood, "that speaketh better things than that of Abel," was to impart his own Spirit to them; and by the tenour of that New Testament or covenant whereof he was Mediator, was

not only to procure that their sins and iniquities should be remembered no more, but that the Divine laws should be "put in their minds, and written in their hearts."[1] They are therefore, "by the blood of the everlasting covenant to be made perfect,"[2] "in every good work to do his will," having "all *that* wrought in them which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." Now when shall he be said to have accomplished his design? Not till every one be presented perfect[3] and faultless in the presence of the Divine glory.[4] Do but consider what was a design worthy of so great an undertaker, the Son of God; and of his being engaged so deeply, of his being so earnestly intent upon it, as to become first a man, then a sacrifice, to effect it.

Consider his death and resurrection, wherein he will have all that belonged to him to have a *consortium*, a participation with him, and conformity to him; as is largely discoursed in the Philippians;[5] and hence we are to make our estimate what is the mark and "prize of the high calling of God in Christ."[6] This can be no other than final consummate Christianity, the Christian's high calling *in termino;* and which they that are inchoatively perfect, or *sincere*, must be so minded as to design it for themselves.[7]

Therefore let me but tell any man, so that he can understand me, what true Christianity now is, and he can tell me what heaven is. Let me tell him what it is to be a sincere Christian in this present state, and he can tell me what it is to be perfect in the heavenly state. The writing God's law in the heart truly and perfectly, goes far towards both.

The two great commandments impressed, that are both fulfilled in love, are of vast compass to this purpose, and with the certain *connexa*, comprehend all: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," etc.; and—"thy neighbour as thyself," etc. What a heaven upon earth would these two create, reduced to practice! and when the impression is perfect, what needs there more?

[1] Heb. viii. 10—12. [2] Chap. xiii. 20, 21. [3] Col. i. 28.
[4] Jude 24. [5] Ch. iii. [6] Ver. 12, 14. [7] Ver. 15.

But God knows, men too commonly measure their heaven by their Christianity, on the wrong hand; a Christianity and a heaven, both external and foreign to them. God deliver me from this so palpable and destructive a delusion of a Christianity and a heaven foreign to my soul! A religion and a felicity that touch not our minds, that never impress our inner man; what can we be the better for them? What! to be imposed upon by so absurd a misconceit, and so repugnant to Scripture, which so expressly tells us *that* glory we are finally to expect, is a glory whereby we are to be glorified, made glorious, and to be revealed in us, and wherein we are to partake with Christ?[1] Or did the Son of God put on man, and suffer so deeply for us, with a design upon us less than this?

But now my work is done, nor do my limits allow me to enlarge in reference to the—

Second head of discourse proposed: In what sense sincere Christians may be said to be already come to the spirits of the just made perfect. Enough may be collected from what hath been said.

It is to be understood,

I. In a relative sense; they are come, they already belong to that general assembly, that church which the myriads of angels and the perfected spirits of the just are of. A *local* coming none can pretend in this case to dream of; they are said *to be come* to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Such were truly said to be *come into* the very constitution of the Roman polity, that were *civitate donati*, admitted freemen, though they lived a thousand miles off.

II. In a real sense; by a gradual, but true participation of the *primordia*—the first and most constituent principles and perfections of the heavenly state.

And now, if that were the thing designed, there is a most adequate groundwork laid for a true and the most ample encomium of that rare person, our never too deeply lamented

[1] Romans viii. 17, 18.

nor too highly renowned Queen, whose funerals drew my thoughts to this theme. View the perfections of the spirits of the just, as they were growing and more eminently grown towards their highest pitch, and here is our ground. Do not wonder it is laid as high as heaven, for thence they begin, as well as end there. By most benign influences from thence, though the plant was set on earth, they had an early bud in concealment; but we have seen them blossom in open view, still aspiring thitherward, as there they are fully blown. Her otherwise royal parentage was thus incomparably more royal. The lustre of her excellent virtues had all the advantage which they could have by 'dwelling well;' as the endowments—what they were—of a great prince heretofore, were noted to have had the contrary disadvantage. It was common sense, not the poet's authority, that could make the apprehension take place: that 'virtue is more grateful, exerted from a comely body.' So illustrious an instance would give more countenance than the most argumentative philosophy, to the opinion, that souls have a great subordinate agency in forming their own mansions: which the more one apprehends, the less credulous he would be of their original equality. It must be a very peculiar genius that could stamp so inimitable and undeceiving signatures as appeared in her Majesty's most graceful countenance, in her comely mien and looks, and all her deportments. Whosoever should behold the fabric she inhabited, made up of pulchritude and state, must conclude some very lovely and venerable inhabitant dwelt there. But nearer approaches discovered such excellencies of the indwelling mind,—that quickness of apprehension, that clearness and strength of reason, that solidity of judgment, that complectionate goodness, the εὐφυΐα, which that noble philosopher speaks of, as the seed-plot of virtues,—that must soon beget, not conviction only, but admiration.

Such were the bounties of nature in the forming a rare and excellent person; but how munificent were the largesses of grace! That reverence of the Divine Majesty that ap-

peared in her whole course; a life transacted under the government of religion; her constant care to avoid what she thought sinful, and readiness to do what she judged might be serviceable to the interest of God; her detestation of the profligate wickedness that she knew to be dishonourable and offensive to him, and of all the principles that any way tended thereto; her continued conversation with God in the constant practice of religious duties, and in all the exercises of godliness that belonged to her most beloved and frequented closet, the family, or more solemn assembly; her most composed seriousness in attendance upon the worship of God in the way which she chose—and which, that she chose no one could think strange; the natural and most unaffected appearances hereof, the remotest from ostentation, but which could not quite be hid: nor *ought*, when in religious assemblies we are to testify we all worship the same God, and that all our applications, and addresses, have one centre above, and are all to be directed to one and the same glorious object; unless one would have the religion of the church be allowed the retiredness of a closet, or reduce joint social worship, wherein all are some way or other to express their unanimity and consent, unto that which is merely solitary and single: her assiduity in her religious course,—the seasons, order, and constancy whereof seemed to be governed by the ordinances of heaven, that ascertain the succession of day and night; so that what was said so long ago of that famed person's justice, (and which equally may of hers,) might have a nobler application to her religion,—that 'one might as soon divert the course of the sun,' as turn her from her daily course in religious duties: (this argued a steady principle and of the highest excellency, that of Divine love; any other would have its more frequent qualms and inequalities. The remark was wise and weighty, concerning the insincere man:[1] "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" That course is

[1] Job xxvii. 10.

never like to be even, uniform, and continued, that springs not from love, or is not sweetened by delight and pleasure:) all these are to us great indications of a copious communication of Divine grace, and that she received not the grace of God in vain. I cannot here omit her reverential regard for the Lord's-day, which at the Hague I had a very particular occasion to take notice of. On a Saturday, a vessel, the packet-boat, was stranded not far from thence; which, lying very near the shore, I viewed, (happening to be thereabouts at that time,) till the last passengers were brought,—as all were,—safe off. Multitudes went to see it, and her Highness being informed of it, said she was willing to see it too, but thought 'she should not, for it was then too late for that evening, and she reckoned by Monday it would be shivered to pieces'; though, it remaining entire till then, she was pleased to view it that day; but she resolved, (she added,) 'she would not give so ill an example, as to go see it on the Lord's-day.'

Next to her exemplary piety towards God, shone with a second lustre her most amiable benignity towards men; and peculiarly towards them whom she judged pious, of whatsoever persuasion in respect of the circumstances of religion. She opened not her mouth, but with wisdom, and in her tongue was the "law of kindness." She hath divers times expressed her acceptance, value, and desire of their prayers, whom she knew in some modes of worship to differ from her; as one that well understood that "the kingdom of God stands" not in lesser things, but "in righteousness, peace," etc., and "that they who in these things serve Christ, are acceptable to God," and are to be "approved of men." She was not inaccessible to such of her subjects, whose dissentient judgments in some such things, put them into lower circumstances. Great she was in all valuable excellencies, nor greater in any, than in her most condescending goodness. Her singular humility adorned all the rest. Speaking once of a good thing, which she intended, she added: 'but of myself I can do nothing;' and somewhat being, (by one of

two more only, then present,) interposed, she answered: 'she hoped God would help her.'

She is, as the text speaks, gone to Mount Sion, in the highest sense of that phrase.

And to sum up all, he that will read the character [1] of an 'inhabitant of that holy hill,' will there read her true and most just character; wherein I cannot omit to take notice, how sacred she reckoned her word. I know with whom she hath sometimes conferred, 'Whether having given a promise of such a seeming import, she could consistently therewith do so or so?' saying: that 'whatever prejudice it were to her, she would never depart from her word.'

These rich endowments every way accomplished her for all the duties that belonged to her, whether in her Christian, conjugal, or political capacity: which if we consider together, the world cannot give an instance, for many by-past ages, of so much lost out of it in one person. When did Christianity lose so conspicuous an ornament? A king, so delectable and helpful a consort? A kingdom, so venerable and beloved a sovereign? For our king how are we concerned to pray, "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions!" And we are to hope he hath some such sincere purposes and vows deeply infixed in his heart, as those subjoined in that psalm;[2] which will engage the Divine presence with him, by which, neither shall his pressures be intolerable, nor his difficulties insuperable; but "his bow shall abide in strength, and the arms of his hands be made strong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."[3]

But England, England! How deplorable is thy case! In what agonies should every concerned heart be for thee, O England! In the latter days—and God grant they be not too late—thou mayest consider, that after many former, defeated methods, thou hadst a prince, yea princes, studiously intent upon making thee a reformed, happy people. Is there now no cause to fear, lest it be determined: "Let him

[1] Ps. xv. and xxiv. [2] Ps. cxxxii. [3] Gen. xlix.

that is filthy, be filthy still; and him that is unjust, be unjust still?"

Few can be ignorant of the endeavours of our most gracious queen to that purpose. And I am persuaded nothing did more recommend our deceased excellent Archbishop to her majesty, than that she knew his heart to be as hers in that design; namely, of a general reformation of manners, that must have concerned all parties; and without which, leading and preparing us thereto, union and the cessation of parties was little to have been hoped for. And so far as I could understand, the attempt of it was as little intended,—being otherwise not likely to meet with either a blessing from God, or any sufficient disposition to it with men. Great *dispositions* must, with much gratitude to God, be acknowledged in those who hold that supreme and this subordinate station. But such a work is not likely to succeed, till (by whatsoever means) minds be brought to that temper, that it will even do itself. And that two such persons should be removed out of them, within not much more than a month's time, is an awful umbrage to us of a Divine determination,—that less gentle methods are fitter for us. And God's holy will be done!

It is now obvious to any considering person, that many very useful reflections might be made upon the text and the occasion together. I shall shut up this present discourse with these that follow.

1. It ought to be most remote from us to confine, in our narrow thoughts, sincere religion and godliness to a party, distinguished by little things, and most extra-essential thereto. Take we that great apostle's document, "I perceive God is no respecter of persons;" and what he said of nations, may not we as aptly say that of all such parties? "They that fear God, and work righteousness, are accepted of him."[1]

Let us once learn to reckon substantial godliness a greater

[1] Acts x. 34, 35.

thing than the using or not using this or that ceremony; and account that faith, mercy, judgment, and the love of God, are not to be passed over for as little things as the tithing of mint, anise, and cummin. I believe there are few in the world, if they cast their eyes about them, but might truly say, what, I thank God, I have often thought, that of all our parties that hold the substantials of religion, I have known some of far greater value than myself. Let the being a good Christian, signify more with us, than to belong to a so-or-so-shaped or figured church.

A noted writer[1] among the ancients brings in one, saying, by way of exprobration to Christians: 'There is Socrates, the prince of wisdom, if any among you be so great, let them imitate him, if they can.' What persuasion among us can produce a greater example than we have been now considering; or more worthy the imitation even of private Christians?

2. The spirits of the just on earth are in a great propinquity and have a near alliance to heaven. They are not *there* to have the first foundations laid of their blessed state, but are only to be "made perfect." They have in them here the first principles, the elements of their final blessedness; heaven in little, as the acorn contains the tree or the embryo the man.

3. The just in this world are of the church in heaven. They "are come to the general assembly, the church of the first-born," etc. All sincere Christians, whether in heaven or earth, (as hath been noted,) make but one family.[2] Good God! Can our little differences here, set us at greater distance than heaven and earth! The observation is worth considering of that wise and noble person: 'It will be found a matter of great moment and use, to define what, and of what latitude, those points are, which discorporate men from the body of the church; and if any think this hath been done, now long ago, let them seriously consider with what

[1] Min. Fel. [2] Eph. iii. 15.

sincerity and moderation the same hath been performed,'[1]—etc. And if it had not been done with due sincerity and moderation in his days, it is much to be doubted whether it have since. In the meantime it is to be considered, that what differenceth anything, *constitutes* it; and if a church, of whatsoever denomination, be constituted in its superstructure—though its foundation be good—"of hay, and stubble," of things that can belong to no church *as* a church, it must some time or other "suffer loss:" and though the builders be "saved," it must be by a more penetrative, than an imagined purgatory fire.

4. Angels must have kind propensions towards men, especially good men, in this world,—knowing these are of the same society and church with them, though the Divine wisdom hath not judged it suitable to our present state of probation, there should be an open and common intercourse between them and us. It is however a great incongruity we should have strange, uncouth, shy, frightful, or unfrequent thoughts of them in the meantime.

5. When we find any excellent persons in our world attain far and high towards the perfection of the heavenly state, it ought to be a great encouragement to us, and is an obligation, to aspire to some like pitch. We see it is not an impossible or an unpracticable thing, and should disdain to crawl *now* as worms, when we are to soar as angels.

6. We ought hereupon to acknowledge and adore the munificence and power of Divine grace, that it should design the making of such abjects as we fit to be associated with such an assembly, "the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect;" and will not fail to effect it, if we comply with the apt methods appointed for that blessed purpose.

7. When such ascend and are taken up from us, that God had eminently prepared for translation, we should take great care lest we unduly regret it; that we do not envy

[1] Lord Viscount *Verul.* Adv. of Learn. *lib.* 9.

heaven its own, to which they are more akin than to our earth; and which had a greater right in them than we could pretend.

8. We should look upon funeral solemnities for such, with more prospect than retrospect, and consider them as directing our eye less downward to our own forsaken world than upwards to the celestial regions and inhabitants. To such,—to die is to be born; they die only out of our mean world, and are born into a most glorious one. Their funerals should be celebrations of their ascent; and an exulting joy should therefore, in that case, not be quite banished from funeral sorrows, but be allowed to mingle therewith, as sunbeams glittering in a cloud. When the greatest person was leaving this world, that ever lived in it, he says: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice that I say, I go to the Father." We should bear our part in the joys of heaven upon this occasion, if we relate to it. And when we are told there is joy there, among the angels of God, for the conversion of such who are thereby but prepared to come to their assembly, we may conclude there is much more for their glorification, when they are fully come and joined to it. Funeral solemnities are very dull melancholy shows, without such references forwards and upwards. With how different a temper of mind would two persons have been the spectators of Jacob's funeral, the one of whom should have looked no further than the Canaanites or Egyptians did, who would only say, 'Some great person is dead;' but the other, by Divine illumination is enabled to apprehend, 'This dust here mingles with the earth of this land, to presignify this people, of whom he was the head, must possess it. Yea, moreover, here the great God will fix his residence and throne; upon such a mount shall be the palace of the supreme King. Here, after great mutations and revolutions, and great destructions both of the Egyptians and Canaanites, shall this people have a long succession of princes and rulers that shall be of *themselves:* and all this but as representing a King and kingdom that shall rule and spread over all the

earth, and reach up at length into heaven. Canaan shall be a holy land. Unto Sion's King shall tributary princes bring their gifts out of Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hands, and all nations serve him. His empire shall confine with the universe, and all power be given him both in heaven and earth.' With what a large and raised mind would such a one have beheld this funeral!—What better Canaan, than we now behold, we shall have in this world, God knows; and we should be the less solicitous to know intermediate things, when we are so fully ascertained of the glorious end of all things. And let us reflect upon the solemn pomp of that late mournful assembly, that lamented our queen's departure out of our world, comparing it with the transcendent magnificence of that triumphant assembly into which she is received above.[1]

[1] It may interest the reader to insert here an epigram of Howe (the only composition of the kind attributed to his pen) on the noble-minded queen whose virtues the preceding funeral sermon celebrates:—

"In Virtue's race, as far at thirty-two
She went, as woman, wife, and queen could do;
But yet her virtues told she died not young,
For Virtue never lived at court so long."

Joshua Wilson, Esq., who kindly called my attention to these lines, observes that Dr. Gibbon, by whom they are recorded ("Memoirs of Pious Women," 1777), gives his authority for them. "The epitaph," says he, "was communicated to the author many years since by Mr. Matthew Collett, grandson of Mr. Howe."—Vol. I. p. 216.—Ed.

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

MRS. ESTHER SAMPSON.

TO MY WORTHY FRIEND,

DR. HENRY SAMPSON.

Sir,

I have perused the papers which you sent me, and find, as far as I can recollect, they contain in them the substance of what was delivered; with no more mistakes than is usual in writing from the mouth of one who is not of the slowest speakers.

Some things besides, which the limits of the time allowed not to be spoken, (having some short memorials of them by me,) I have added, conceiving they might also contribute towards the good end you proposed to yourself in so earnestly desiring this publication—the assisting of their patience, and their good and placid thoughts of God, who are exercised under long and languishing distempers. The observations which your profession hath occasioned you to make, in the cases of many others, have I doubt not let you see the need of somewhat to this purpose; otherwise the example you have had so long before your eyes of so calm and composed a temper, in this excellent relative of yours, might have made you less apprehensive how great an addition a fretful unquiet spirit is, both to the sin and the affliction of a sickly state. I am sensible your own affliction is great in the loss you now sustain; the relief will be great and suitable which the forethoughts of that state will afford, "where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

I am, Sir,

In much sincerity, and affection,

Yours to serve you in the work and labour of the gospel,

J. H.

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

MRS. ESTHER SAMPSON.

LUKE xiii. 16.

"AND OUGHT NOT THIS WOMAN, BEING A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM, WHOM SATAN HATH BOUND, LO, THESE EIGHTEEN YEARS, BE LOOSED FROM THIS BOND, ON THE SABBATH-DAY?"

You will soon see the occasion and connexion of these words, by viewing over the whole paragraph to which they belong: "And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan

hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."[1]

Inasmuch as our blessed Lord spake these words, and did the thing which occasioned them, upon that which was, with the Jews, their Sabbath-day; it cannot be unfit for us to consider them upon ours,—they so fitly leading us to consider also *another* release, wrought "for a daughter of Abraham" too, on our Sabbath-day.

It was formerly told you upon what occasion, and I doubt not but you generally know upon whose account, we were to divert from our usual course and subject at this time. Nor could anything have been more suitable to the present occasion: for not only was this daughter of Abraham released from her infirmity upon the Sabbath-day; but the time wherein it remained upon her, in a great and manifold complication, was,—as her surviving consort hath acquainted me, and who therefore recommended this subject,—precisely about eighteen years.

There are, it is true, disagreements between our case and that case in the text; which do not therefore render both together less instructive to us, but the more. And, to make way to what may be so, you must here take notice that these words are part of our Lord's defence of what he had done in performing this work of mercy, wherein what he says is justly severe and very clearly convictive. It is very deserved and just severity, that he called him who cavilled in the case by his own true name, "Thou hypocrite." He, under pretence of great sanctity, discovers the highest enmity, even against our blessed Lord Himself, who came—being sent—upon the holiest and kindest design into this world. The zeal which he pretends for the observation of the Sabbath could not be the thing that he did really mean, or that acted him in this case; for it was not likely he could be ignorant of what was a

[1] Luke xiii. 10—17.

known adjudged case among the Jews,—as some of their own rabbies[1] inform us,—that all needful endeavours ought to be used for the cure of the sick upon the Sabbath-day: so as that he very well knew, no rule could be broken in this case. But this he reckons was somewhat plausible, and he pleases himself in it, that he could tell how to vent his spite against Christ and Christianity under a mock show of great sanctimony. And our Lord justly calls him what indeed he was, when he would thus seem what he was not. It was not that he cared for religion, or for anything of real sanctity, of which a due and just observation of the Sabbath was a real part; but that he had a mind, as far as conveniently he could, to express his displeasure at that evidence and lustre wherewith the glorious works our Lord wrought evinced Him to be the Messiah; while yet he was struck with that awe of Him, that he adventures not to direct his reproof to *Him*, but the people.

It is here by the way to be noted, that *they* were not thus disaffected to our Lord, and the religion he was about to introduce; no, but this ceremonious bigot, a "ruler of the synagogue," was the ill-pleased disaffected person.

I shall not trouble you with the discussion what sort of power it was that belonged to that office. Some, well acquainted with the Jewish writings, say that the ruler of the synagogue was not wont himself to officiate, as minister *in sacris;* but his business was *circa sacra*,—to regulate the administration. We consider not his power, but his ill-will and enmity against Christ and true religion. The people, in the meantime, thronged after Him in multitudes, and beheld the great works He wrought with joy, and glorified God: only where was more power, and probably more knowledge, there was more too of a peevish spite and envy, that the

[1] *Vid. Maimon. Constitut. de Fundam.* c. 5, 9. *cum Abrav.* N. 13, 14: and, as our own Dr. Lightfoot says upon that question of our Lord's, "Is it lawful to heal upon the Sabbath-day?"—quoting divers more of theirs to that purpose,—'he violated not the Sabbath so much as their own canons allowed.' See his Works, Vol. 2.

interest of our Lord was, by so proper means, growing in the world. A sad, and not a new, thing,—that religion should have most opposition, whence it should have most of countenance and advantage to dilate and spread itself! "Do any of the rulers believe on him?" But the people, whom they despised, and pronounced accursed for that reason, were more apt and forward to receive the gospel.[1] The more there is of light, unaccompanied with a pious inclination, the higher, the more intense and fervent, the finer and more subtle, is the venom and malice against Christ and real Christianity.

But our Lord was not diverted from his kind and compassionate design by any such obstructions as these. His love triumphs over them, and he makes that discovery of his compassion which could not but carry the clearest conviction with it, as his reproof carried the brightest justice. 'Why, what!' saith he: 'do not any of you loose an ox or an ass from the stall on the Sabbath-day? and shall not I loose a daughter of Abraham?' It is like she was a daughter of Abraham, not only as being a Jewess, but as being a *believer;* as being, according to Scripture language, "of Abraham's seed" in the spiritual sense as well as the natural, and he was the more peculiarly compassionate upon that account; and yet more, because her ail proceeded from the malignant influence of the devil. Shall not I loose such a one whom Satan hath bound,—that great enemy of mankind? Why should not I show myself so much the more a friend, by how much the more he appears an enemy, and give the earliest relief the matter can admit?

It is very true, indeed, his compassion was never to incline him to do unfit and unseasonable things, or things that were no way subservient to his principal end; but such a subserviency being supposed, his relief must be with the earliest; to-day before morrow, though it were the Sabbath-day.

And so now you have the ground of discourse plainly in view before you:—

[1] John vii. 48, 49.

That the devil cannot be more maliciously intent to afflict those that relate to God—even, when it is in his power, with bodily distempers—than our Lord Jesus is compassionately willing to relieve them without distinction of time, when it shall be consistent with, and subservient to, his higher and greater purposes.

In speaking to this I shall,

I. Touch briefly upon what is here expressed in the text —the hand that Satan may have in the afflictions, yea and in the bodily distempers of men, and even of them that belong to God among them.

II. What hand our Lord Jesus has in their relief and releasement.

III. How far we may understand or may reasonably expect his compassion to influence him in such cases.

IV. I shall show that, however the release be wrought, it is done very mercifully towards them that belong peculiarly to God: and so make use of all.

I. Somewhat briefly as to that first query: What hand it is supposable the devil may have in the afflictions of men, and more particularly of them that belong to God; as this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, was to be considered as one within the compass of God's covenant, and not improbably as one that in the strictest sense was in covenant with God.

1. It is plain, in the text, the devil had a direct hand in her distemper, called "a spirit of infirmity." There were more evident and more frequent instances of this kind in that time, the devil then setting himself more openly to contend against the incarnate Son of God, upon His more open appearance to rescue and recover an apostate world from under his dominion and tyranny. But as to more ordinary cases we may further consider—

2. That the devil is a constant enemy to mankind, apt and inclined, as far as God permits him, to do men all the mischief he can.

3. That as he first introduced sin into the world, so he hath

by consequence all the calamities that afflict it. There had been no death, sickness, or distemper upon the bodies of men, but from hence. Consider the devil therefore as the prince and leader of the apostasy; who first drew man into transgression and thereby rendered him liable to the justice of his Maker; turned his paradise into a desert, and a region of immortal undecaying life into a valley of sickly languishings and death itself. So may he be said to have had a remoter hand in binding not only this daughter of Abraham, but every child of Adam, in all the afflictions, maladies, and distempers which befall them here, and finally in the bonds of death too, whereof he is said to "have had the power;"[1] though the children of the *second* Adam—with whom, for this purpose, He was partaker of flesh and blood, and became with them a "son of Abraham," and of his seed—are, by being so bound, released and made free both from death and the bondage of fearing it, to which they were otherwise subject all their days; as we shall further see anon.

4. Though God do not ordinarily allow him more power, yet we may well suppose him to have more malice against these children of Abraham—who thereby pass into the account of His own children also—being more intent upon vexing and afflicting whom he apprehends or suspects he shall never be able finally to destroy; and always apt to use all the power shall be allowed him, to this mischievous purpose. We find that the afflictions of the people of God in other kinds, and even in this kind, are, expressly, often attributed to the devil. In other kinds: "Satan shall cast some of you into prison."[2] And divers think "that thorn in the flesh," which the apostle suffered,[3] was some acute bodily pain; and he says expressly, it was "a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him." He, it is said, smote Job with the tormenting boils that afflicted him so grievously and so long, and brought the other calamities upon him, that you read of in his story.

5. And again it is further to be considered, that whereas

[1] Heb. ii. 14, 15. [2] Rev. ii. 10. [3] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

in all diseases the morbific matter, whether immediate in men's bodies or remoter in the encompassing air, differs not from other matter, otherwise than only in the various disposition, figuration, and motion of parts and particles, whereof it is made up; *so,* inasmuch as the devil is called the "prince of the power of the air," we know nothing to the contrary, but that he may frequently so modify that, as that it shall have most pernicious influences upon the bodies of men; and upon those especially, so far as God permits, that he has any greater malice against.

6. And again, supposing this, it is not a stranger thing that God should permit him to afflict the bodies of them that belong to Him, than to disturb their minds. Sure their bodies are not more sacred. If we should suppose that he may some way or other perniciously agitate the humours in human bodies, it is no harder a supposition than that he should so variously form the images in the fancy, by which he tempts; for herein surely he comes nearer us and is more inward to us.

7. Nor is it less supposable that God should, in some instances, permit the devils to follow their inclinations in afflicting his people, than wicked men to follow theirs, which, in the general, carry them to the same thing; when He knows how to turn the one to after-advantage, as well as the other.

But we have no ground to think, notwithstanding all this, that the wisdom and goodness of Providence will ordinarily permit that this agency of the devil, in the mentioned cases, should be altogether in a contra-natural way; but only by so moving and acting with natural causes, that he may be also obviated, through the ordinary blessing of God, by natural means and causes too. Much less is it reasonable that diseases should be themselves reckoned very devils, as was the opinion of the Gnostics of old, wherein they much concurred with the Manichees; and whom, together with them, the more honest-minded pagan Plotinus so copiously confutes; though that that was more anciently a common opinion, the

Septuagint's rendering the word that signifies 'plague' by the word *δαιμόνιον*, in several places of Scripture, seems to intimate. But the commonness of such an opinion, in a dark time, signifies nothing to sway ours this way or that.

But whatsoever hand the devil may be supposed to have in *their* afflictions or sicknesses that belong to God, we are sure—

II. That our Lord Jesus has a most kind hand (whensoever it is) in their release; which though it were here in a more extraordinary and immediate way and beside the course of nature, the disparity in this case signifies nothing to the lessening of the favour towards those whom he vouchsafes to relieve in other cases; for the influence that he has in ordinary cases is as truly Divine. If the cure of a diseased person be wrought by his blessing upon ordinary natural means, his co-operating with nature is less amazing, but not less effectual or less kind: as also the efflux from God is, for his own part, as real when he works *with* second causes as *without* them, and as immediately reaches the effect, in both the senses of *immediateness*, whereof so much noise is made in the schools.

And we must further know our Lord Christ is now the universal Regent of all nature, even as he is the Christ,—the world being devolved into his hands, and all power being given to him both in heaven and earth. "He is Lord of all;" when therefore any of you are sick, it is by his disposal if you are recovered out of that sickness. Nor is his agency less or lower, whether it be by blessing a medicine or working a miracle; his power and love are the same either way. And know there is an honour and acknowledgment due from Christians to their great crucified Lord, who hath founded a dominion over this world in his blood: "who died, and revived, and rose again, that he might be Lord of living and dead." Therefore you are to reckon you are beholden to Christ for all your recoveries, and all your refreshings that you meet with, amidst the many infirmities and frailties of this your present mortal state.

And if the release be by *death*,—as the case is which we now have specially to do with,—that universal power of his over all lives, must be understood immediately to reach to that case too. It is he that measures lives, that lengthens them out and cuts them shorter, at his own pleasure. And as to those that are more peculiarly his own, it is a more peculiar and favourable superintendency that he has over that affair, even of their very dying. Their death is precious in his sight. He with a most gentle tender hand unties the knot of man, releases and receives the dislodging soul. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"—as dying Stephen speaks. But

III. We are to consider how far our Lord Jesus' compassion concerns him in such cases; or wherein that may move him to interpose in them so as in this case he did.

And here two things are to be asserted. 1. That his compassion has not supreme and principal influence in this case. 2. That yet it hath real influence.

1. That it hath not supreme or principal influence in such cases. And this doth really require to be more principally insisted on as of greater importance to narrow terrene minds, that are apt to measure all things by themselves, and in reference to their own little sphere and compass; and to themselves only in their present state, as they are inhabitants of this minute spot of earth; as if all things ought to bend and yield to their present convenience and accommodation here. Whereupon, they wonder when they are sick and in pain, God doth not presently relieve and ease them; and think they should do so for any friend or neighbour, if it were in their power.

Know, therefore, it was not from compassion, as the solitary or as the chief inducement, that our Lord did work this release for this daughter of Abraham. That cannot be supposed, for he can never be understood to make a creature, and the advantages of a creature, his supreme end. That would have been to invert the order of things, to dethrone God and deify man; and had been itself a real sort of that idolatry, which was one among the many horrid evils which

he purposely came to redress, and give remedy to, in this apostate degenerate world. He had a greater inducement; that is, that he might diffuse the glory of God among the children of men; and that he might give evidence thereby to the truth of his own mission, and prove most convincingly that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the very person that was anointed and sent about that great undertaking, to recover God's rights in this lapsed world; to bring about a reconciliation between God and men. And upon this account, when he wrought cures upon men's bodies, it was out of a higher compassion to their souls.

And though even this itself, of saving men's souls, was not his highest design, but the glory of God, (as we shall see further by and by,) yet it being truly designed by him, and more principally than their bodily ease and relief, *this* was an apt means to this his lower end. For whereas, in order to this, he was to manifest himself a Divine Saviour; it was requisite he should give a joint and an equal demonstration of the two things which his being so implies,—his Godlike power and love. The former *alone* it did not serve his purpose to show, which he might have shown as much by inflicting plagues on men's bodies, as working cures; by striking them with blindness, lameness, etc., as by giving them sight, and soundness. But it was necessary to his end his miracles should be beneficent; and that he should,—as it is elsewhere said in the evangelical story he did,—"go about doing good," and not make men afraid of him by showing the power of a God in destructive strokes and judgments; but (which became a Saviour) express a divine good-will towards men, and thereby make his way into their hearts; bring them to understand and own a Saviour, and, as such, to fall in and comply with his kind design towards them. And this, as it served to exalt God in the world, chiefly induced him to work this present cure. If his compassion towards a poor afflicted woman, labouring under bodily infirmity, were his principal inducement; if therefore she must be presently cured out of hand, even on the Sabbath-day, because she had

been now bound eighteen years: why, I pray you, was she to have been bound eighteen years? or why bound at all? His divine knowledge of the case, and power to have redressed or prevented it, had as well served his compassionate inclination long before. Or why was not such a course formerly set on foot and continued in the world, that men might be cured of blindness, deafness, lameness, fevers, dropsies, or whatsoever other maladies, easily and by speaking a word, in any former time? Why was it deferred to this time? Or why hath not such a course been kept afoot ever since his ascension? Hath heaven rendered him less merciful and compassionate? Is it so unkind and ill-natured a place?

It is true that his apology for the cure he now wrought, to this ruler of the synagogue, seems to have no higher reference; nor was he bound, unseasonably, to declare his utmost end and design, to a prejudiced, malicious enemy. *That* was to speak itself, to shine by its own light, and by such means and methods as these, gradually to make its own way into less obstructed minds, insensibly sliding in upon them; which might better be done—time being given at leisure to consider things—by the real evidence which his works carried with them, than by industrious and often-repeated verbal commentaries and expositions.

He sometimes spake it out expressly,—as he thought fit,—to competent and more prepared hearers, that his great design was to make himself and his errand be understood; who he was, and what he came into the world for; that he was the Son of God, the promised Messiah; and that his business was to save them that were lost, and to restore God's interest in an apostate lost world—whose rights were to be cared for, in the first place. "He redeemed us to God by his blood;"[1]—or for the glory of God, as he summed it up in the case of Lazarus, when he was told of his being sick, "This sickness is not unto death;"[2] that is, it was not to terminate in a continuing death, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of

[1] Rev. v. 9. [2] John xi. 4.

man might be glorified;" the *same* account which this evangelist gives of all these his great works and why they were recorded,—that we "might believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God,"[1] etc. And, otherwise, was it so considerable a thing, that a man well got out of this fearful gulf, as Lazarus now was, should be fetched back again? that so mighty a wonder should be wrought, that the enclosure of the grave should be torn open, and the released soul should be again drawn down,—as a bird escaped, caught back into its former confinement,—to converse a while longer amidst the impurities of a "world lying in wickedness," and with shadows, in a "world the fashion whereof passes away?"

No; miracles were not so cheap things. We may observe the great and wise God hath, for great and weighty reasons, been always very sparing in making very observable innovations upon nature, or any considerable changes in the ordinary course and method of natural causes and their operations, as a thing less suitable to a state of probation, wherein men were to be held in this world: and hath only been wont to do it, where the inconvenience was to be balanced by preponderating greater reasons; which might as much require that he should depart from the fixed rule sometimes, as other reasons might, that he should not do it often. It was equally necessary that miracles should not be common, as that there should be any wrought at all; and in great part for the same reason. For if they were common, they must lose the only design for which they could be at all useful. If God should do, in this kind, what is not necessary, he should the less effect by it that which is; inasmuch as they are only useful, as they are strange, and, in the natural way, unaccountable. But there is nothing so great in this kind, but ceases to be thought strange, if it be common; otherwise, is not the forming of the eye, in itself, as great a thing, as to give sight to the blind? Or the framing such a world as this, as great a thing as the most stupendous miracle that ever was wrought in it?

[1] John xx. 31.

It was indeed necessary, somewhat extraordinary should at first be done to demonstrate *that Man*, Jesus of Nazareth, to be the Son of God; which it was impossible should otherwise be known. When that was fully done, it was not necessary there should still be a repetition of miracles from age to age to prove the former were wrought, or the truth of the narratives which reported them. That was sufficiently to be known in the ordinary way, as other matters of fact are, or other history, about which there is no doubt made among men. And the history of these things has greater advantages to recommend it to the certain belief of after-time, than most that ever were writ besides, upon many accounts. It was indeed most becoming the majesty, wisdom, and goodness of God, taken together, to do what might answer the real necessities of men, whom he was designing to save; but not to indulge their curiosity, nor their unaccountable dulness, sloth, or prejudice, whereby they may be unapt to inquire about or receive plain things.

Therefore miracles were to be done as rarities; sometimes, not at all times; and at such a time and upon such an occasion, most of all,—to notify and signalize the Redeemer at his first appearance, to draw men's eyes upon him, that they might take notice of him, and demean themselves towards him accordingly. This was to be done sufficiently, once for all; and the great stupidity of the world made a matter which needed *some* supernatural evidence, need *so much* in that kind. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." And if he did so far comply with the necessity of degenerate humanity as to give once some signal convictive evidence that he was the Christ; the Divine wisdom would take care it should not be so often done as to become trivial, and insignificant to its proper end; the importance whereof was such as that it ought to transcend any regard to the welfare of men's bodies, but not to exclude it: which we now come briefly to show, in the next place; namely,—

2. That though compassion towards an infirm creature, under bodily distemper, was not the principal inducement

unto this cure, it was a real one. Our Lord doth really compassionate the frailties of those that relate to him, while they dwell in mortal flesh. "He himself bears our sicknesses." He has a tenderness towards them, even while he doth not think it fit actually to release and set them free; which makes way to what was proposed in the last place to be insisted on as preparatory to the intended *use*.

IV. That in what way soever our Lord Jesus works a release for them that are most specially his own, from their bodily distempers, he doth it in mercy to them. He lets their affliction continue upon them in mercy; greater mercy, indeed, than would be in an unseasonable deliverance. But when he sees it a fit season to give them a release, that is an unquestionable mercy too; though it be not in such a way as appears such to vulgar eyes.

It is more easily apprehensible to be from compassion, if he relieves a poor, pained, weak, languishing, sickly creature, by giving renewed strength, and ease, and health in this world. But when the release is by death, as in the case we have under our further present consideration, it is hard to persuade that this is done in mercy; that there is compassion in this case. There is, it is true, in this a manifest disparity, but not a disadvantageous one. Is it a less thing to release a holy soul from the body, than from bodily distempers? It can only be so in the opinion of such blind moles of the earth, as the children of men are now generally become. But let the case be considered according to its true and real import. Why! a recovery from sickness is but an adjournment of death, it is but death deferred a while. When there is a release wrought in such a way as this in which her's was wrought whom God hath lately taken from amongst us,—*here* is a cure, not only of one bodily distemper, but of all; not only of actual diseasedness, but of the possibility of ever being diseased more; here is a cure wrought, not only of infirmity, but of death—for the saints conquer death by suffering it; yea a cure, not of death only, but of mortality, of any liableness to death, so as it can never touch them more;

yea further, not only of bodily diseases, but of spiritual too, far worse and more grievous than all bodily diseases whatsoever; a cure of blindness of mind, deadness and hardness of heart; of all indispositions towards God, his ways and presence, towards the most spiritual duties, and the best and most excellent of our enjoyments. The "body of sin" and the mortal body are both put off together. The imprisoned soul is set free, and enters upon a state of everlasting liberty; is released from the "bands of death," of whatsoever kind, and in the highest, fullest sense shall "reign in life, through Jesus Christ." What is the decease of a saint, but a translation out of a valley of death, a Golgotha, a place of skulls, a region where death reigns, into the region of perfect and everlasting life? It is not to be called death simply or absolutely; but with diminution: it is death only in a certain respect; when in a higher, and much more considerable respect, it is a *birth* rather, a dying out of one world and a being born at the same time into another, a much more lightsome, a purer and more glorious world. The soul is cured in a moment, of whatsoever was grievous or afflicting to it; and the body put into a certain *way* of cure,—of being made, from an earthly, mean, mortal thing, heavenly, spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal; from a "vile, a glorious body," like Christ's own, and by "that power, by which he can subdue all things unto himself."[1]

And now for *use*.

I. Learn that there is no inconsistency in the case, that the same person should be at once the subject of long-continued bodily affliction and of Divine compassion. These are reconcilable things,—sickly languishings under which one may be ready to fail, and "compassions that fail not." This is a common theme, but the due consideration of it is too little common. Let it now be considered, with impartial equity and with deep seriousness. Do you think the all-comprehending mind of the Son of God now first began to

[1] Phil. iii. 21.

pity this daughter of Abraham? While he was not yet ascended, this attribution is given him—otherwise, no doubt, than as a false compliment—"Lord, thou knowest all things." Since his ascension, we are assured he hath "a feeling of our infirmities," so as to be "touched" with them; a continuing sympathy, remembering the inconveniences of that state he had passed through,—as she once, 'non ignara mali,' etc.,—and is always ready, therefore, to do the part of "a faithful and merciful high priest." Before his descent, we must, with equal reason, suppose him to have an entire prospect of the sad case of wretched mortals in this miserable world of ours. What else made him descend? And after that he was descended, this mark could not but lie still before the eye of his Divine mind, to which "all his works were known from the beginning of the world." Yet the cure is deferred, the release is not given, till the appointed season. When it is the case of any of you to be afflicted with long sickness, and to feel the tediousness of a lingering disease, (count upon it that it may be so, as it is like it hath been, with divers of you,) do not then permit the matter to the censure of an incompetent, partial judge. If you consult flesh and blood, if sense be to pronounce in the case and give judgment, how hard will it be to persuade that you are not neglected in your languishings; that your groans and faintings are pitied; though you are so plainly told, "that whom the Lord loves, he chastens!" Are you not ready to say, 'How can this stand with being, at the same time, the object of Divine pity? If he pity me, would he let me lie and languish thus, in so miserable a plight, day after day and year after year?' Yes, these things very well agree, and I would fain shortly evince to you that they do.

1. Why! his compassion may sufficiently be evidenced in another kind, and by another sort of instances. Sure it will speak compassion, if he frequently visit his frail infirm creatures, and "by his visitation preserve their spirits;" if he support them, if he refresh them, this is grace. "My grace shall be sufficient for thee," saith he to the great apostle,

when he refused to release him from that "thorn in the flesh, that messenger of Satan" that did "buffet" him.

2. Besides, compassion may appear by this kind of dispensation itself. It may not only carry that *with* it, but *in* it, which may show good-will. If long-continued affliction may be supposed to proceed from compassion, it doth much more consist with it. It may proceed from compassion, and bear the relation to it of an effect to the cause. We find it expressly so said in Scripture, and who can so truly speak God's mind as himself? He "afflicts in very faithfulness," and as "many as the Lord loves, he chastens; and scourges every son whom he receives."[1] Affliction must be the effect of his real and most sincere good-will and compassion,—though of long continuance,—if it be apt and intended to do you good in higher and in greater regards than those wherein you suffer: or if the good your affliction does you, or is fitly designed to do you, be of a nobler and more excellent kind than that whereof it deprives you, it must be understood, not only to be consistent with kindness and good-will, but to be produced of it. For the same principle that intends the end, must also intend the proper means that serve to effect it. Now the kind of this good is thus to be estimated. You read, "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him."[2] As a father. The relation he is in to them, is that of a father to his children. But we must understand under what notion he is so related; and we are told, "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not then much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."[3] We have here an account where the relation terminates, and see both the *object* of his more special kindness and good-will, which

[1] Prov. iii. 12; quoted Heb. xii. 5, 6; Rev. iii. 19.
[2] Ps. ciii. 13.
[3] Heb. xii. 9, 10.

accompany the relation, and the *end* of it. He is "the Father of their *spirits*," whence, therefore, we may collect, the object of that love which goes with the relation must be their spirits also; the end of it is their spiritual advantage, "to make them partakers of his holiness." His holiness is a lofty word, and carries the matter high. Understanding it soberly, as we may be sure it was meant, it must signify the holiness which he hath himself impressed, and the impression whereof is the lively resemblance and image of his own. And is not this a good of a nobler and more excellent kind, than we can lose by a sickness? better than the ease of this vile flesh, that was made out of dust and tends thither? The object is their *spirits;* for there the kindness, that belongs to the relation, must terminate, where the relation terminates. "How much more shall we not be subject to the Father of our spirits, and live?" The Father of our spirits is there contradistinguished from the fathers of our flesh. God is not the Father of our flesh, but the Father of our spirits; he is the Creator of our flesh too, our flesh is his creature, but not his offspring. There must be a similitude and likeness of nature between a father and a child, which there is not necessarily between a *maker* and the thing *made.* In respect of our spiritual part, we are his offspring; and he is so a Father to us, both as the souls of men in common bear his natural image, and, if they be regenerate, as they bear his holy image too. And the case may be so, that the suffering of our flesh is necessary for the advantage of our spirits. Our flesh may suffer so as that the spirit shall be the better for it: and then pity itself, compassion itself, must not only permit, but cause and produce such a course of dispensation, as whereby that end shall be attained,—"the making us partakers of his holiness." So the apostle speaks of his own case: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."[1] *Though our outward man perish.* 'We are compassed about with deaths, that are

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 16.

continually beating down the walls of this outward man; they are beating upon it, and are likely to infer its perishing; and if it perish, let it perish; I am not solicitous'—as though he had said—'about that. If it must come down, let it come down; in the midst of all these outward assaults, our inward man is renewed day by day, gathers a fresh and increasing strength and vigour, whilst this outward man is tending to dissolution and dust.' And several ways such continued afflictions upon the outward man, may make for the advantage of the inward man, in the best kind.

i. As they withdraw and take off the mind and heart from this world, a debasing and defiling thing, and which transforms the soul that converses too much with it, into a dunghill,—fills it with ill savour. But what doth all this world signify to a sickly, pained person?

ii. As it engages them to be much in prayer. Nothing is more suitable than that an afflicted life be a life of much prayer. "Is any man afflicted, let him pray."[1] Much affliction hath a natural aptitude to incline men this way. "In their affliction they will seek me early."[2] It is a dictate of nature, even when grace as yet hath no possession; but which, through God's blessing, may by this means help to introduce it. For it urges the soul Godward, who is the "God of all grace;" obliges it to converse with him, whereby somewhat better may be gained than is sought. In their afflictions they will be submissive and lie at my feet, saith God; they will seek me early, from whom, otherwise, I should never hear, it may be, all their life long. Oh! that you would understand the matter so, when God afflicts in such kind so as his hand touches your very bone and flesh; this is the design of it,—to make you pray, to bring you upon your knees, to put you into a supplicating posture: if he can upon any terms hear from you, though you seek him but for bodily ease and refreshing, it may be a means of the greatest advantage to you, ere God have done with you, when once

[1] James v. 13. [2] Hos. v. 15.

he has brought you, by this means, to treat; when he has got you into a more tractable disposition, there is hope in the case. If thus he "open your ear to discipline, and be to you an interpreter, one of a thousand, to show you his righteousness; he may seal instruction to you, and save your soul from going down to the pit, having found a ransom" for you.[1]

But for those that have a real interest in God and union with Christ, that which occasions much prayer is likely to be the means of much spiritual improvement and advantage to them.

iii. It puts several suitable graces upon exercise, and by being exercised, they grow. It tries their faith, and improves it. Faith is, in such a case as this, necessarily called forth into act, if there be the principle; and as it acts, it grows, becomes more and more strong and lively. Their patience is exercised by it, and perfected; and that has a great influence upon their universal perfection. "Let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect."[2] There will be a universal languor, (as if he should have said,) upon your spirits, if you be impatient; if you cannot suffer,—as patience is an ability for suffering; if you can by no means endure without tempestuous agitations or sullen despondencies of spirit. But if patience have its perfect work, that will infer a universal healthfulness and good habit into your whole soul.

Their love to God is, in such a case, eminently tried and improved. "Blessed is the man that endures temptation,"[3] —tentative affliction is there meant, as above.[3] "For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him,"[4]—which implies, their love to him is the great thing put upon trial in that case. And it is a great trial of love to God, a very improvable opportunity of discerning its sincerity, when, upon a long affliction, you can appeal to God, and say: 'Thou

[1] Job xxxiii. 23, 24. [2] James i. 2—4. [3] Ver. 2.
[4] James i. 12.

knowest I love thee; though thou smite and kill, I will still love thee. No discontentful motion, no repining thought shall ever be allowed a place in my breast; there may be sighs, but no murmurings; groans, but no tumults; nothing of displeasure against thy holy pleasure.'

iv. It occasions such to live much upon the borders of eternity. Under affliction we "look not to the things that are seen, and temporal; but to the things that are unseen, and eternal;" which make us count our affliction, though long, but momentary.[1] And those souls will prosper and flourish that have so unspeakably more to do with the other world than with this. It is in this way that the afflictions of this present state "do work for us the far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory,"[2] as they direct our eye forward; "while we look, not to the things which are seen, which are but temporal; but to the things which are unseen and eternal."[3] Life and spirit, strength and vigour enter, as it were, at our eye; which is prompted, by the horror of frightful spectacles in this scene of things, to look to another, where all things appear lightsome, pleasant, and glorious.

There are other considerations whereby you might argue to yourselves not only the consistency, but the great suitableness, of an afflicted state in this world, with God's favour, kindness, and compassion towards you: as,—

That when he is more highly provoked, he threatens not to *afflict*, as the heaviest of penalties. "Why should they be smitten any more?"[4] "I will no more punish your daughters," etc.[5] "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone:—"[6]

That his covenant obliges him to it as to them, who are on stricter terms in covenant with him,—Christ's own seed being signified by David's, as by David is manifestly Christ himself; Ps. lxxxix.: where you may see how, and after what tenour his covenant runs:[7] according whereto he himself

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. [2] Ver. 17. [3] Ver. 18. [4] Is. i. 5.
[5] Hos. iv. 14. [6] Ver. 17. [7] Ver. 31—34.

elsewhere acknowledges, that in very faithfulness God had afflicted him[1]:—

That, in experience, we are apt to grow remiss, secure and negligent, when all things are externally well with us. And let us but appeal to ourselves, how much a wakeful temper of spirit under affliction, is better than carelessness and vanity of mind, accompanied with fleshly ease and pleasure:—

That we can ourselves easily apprehend, that it may not only consist with the tenderness of a parent to have the wound of a child searched, though with much pain, but proceed from it:—

That in heaven our judgment of things will be right and incorrupt; where we shall apprehend no cause of complaint, that through many sicknesses, diseases, and death itself, our way was made for us thither: and if that shall then be a true judgment, the thing itself must be as true now. But these I hastily hint, and pass to some further use.

II. We may next collect, that since it is out of doubt the devil may have some hand in our outward affliction, we are concerned to take so much the more care that he may not have his end upon us by it. A hand he may have, and we cannot determine how far; but whether it be more or less, great care we are concerned to take how to frustrate his design. He has the most mischievous ends that can be; and designs worse things to us than the affliction which is the means, whatsoever that be. He would fain engage us in a controversy with God, would have us contend with Him; murmur, fret, blaspheme and curse God; and therewith send out our last and dying breath. That was his design upon Job. Let us labour to frustrate it, as he did. Divers of the ancients, Justin Martyr, Jerome, Cyprian, and Austin, speak much to this purpose; how great a design the devil drives in being the author of sicknesses and diseases to men,—that he might make them apply themselves to him, and divert from God; as that wicked prince did, whom by the prophet we

[1] Ps. cxix. 75.

find so sharply reproved for it, as if there were no God in Israel, that he went to the God of Ekron;—some demon or other, as we have reason to think.

The last-mentioned of those authors speaks of it as just matter of excommunication, when those that bear the name of Christians shall, in such cases, use means bearing no natural proportion or accommodateness to the end,—charms, spells, etc., for ease or cure of maladies; wherein no relief could reasonably be expected, but from the devil's agency; who may be officious enough, if especially he have first hurt, to heal too; that by practising upon their bodies, he may entangle their souls, and—according to his wont of running counter to God, who wounds that He may the more effectually heal and save—by a present temporary cure, wound mortally, and finally destroy.

He hath not left the world, no not the Christian world, quite ignorant of his methods in these kinds; of training men, by gradual steps, into things, first, that seem innocent, and then into such familiarities, (whether their real distress or their curiosity were the first handle he took hold of them by, or the engine by which he drew them,) till, at length, it comes to express covenanting. If the matter come not so far, it is rare to come off from the least tamperings without a scratch. "He that is born of God, keeps himself, that the evil one may not touch him,"[1]—as knowing he designs to touch mortally, and, if he touch, to kill. If it proceed so far as a solemn league, how tragical consequences doth story abound with! That of Count Matiscon (plucked away by the devil from among divers persons of quality whom he was entertaining, and at noonday whirled in the air three times about the city, in open view of the people, to whom he in vain cried for help) reported by some historians; and that of an infamous magician of Saltzburg, and divers others; are instances both very extraordinary and very monitory.

But as to a future ruin, which he finally aims to involve

[1] 1 John v. 18.

men in with himself, he hath not faster hold of any, than those that have learnt to ridicule everything of this kind, and who have put so much Sadducism into their creed (consisting of so many negatives, or things they believe not, that they scarce leave enough positive to admit that name) as to think there is no such creature; perhaps as being conscious there can be no worse than themselves. But how near is he to them that think him out of the universe!

III. Since it is possible the devil may bind even those that belong to God, with some kind of bodily affliction or other; it is the more to be apprehended how much worse bonds they are, in which he binds those that do *not* belong to Him. Oh! that you would be serious here! How many such sad cases are there amongst even them (as may be feared) that are called Christians, concerning which it may be said, Here is a soul that Satan hath bound, not eighteen, but, it may be, thirty, forty, fifty years! Oh! when shall this soul be released, that Satan hath so long bound?

IV. As from the devil's malice to the bodies of men we may collect his greater malice to their souls, so we may judge proportionably of Christ's compassions; that as they incline him to give them all suitable relief in their bodily afflictions, as far as can consist with those measures which infinite wisdom hath pitched upon for the government of this present world, and as shall fall in with the design of his office of a Redeemer and Saviour to us; so they much more incline him to relieve embondaged souls: for this doth most directly fall in with his design, and is the proper business of his office; the other may be only collateral to it, and as it were to be done on the by. He came not into this world to procure that men might not be sick or pained, or be presently restored to health and ease; but he came and died, that souls might live; to procure for them pardon, reconciliation with God, all needful assisting influences of grace, and eternal life. Of these therefore they may be most assured, if they duly apply themselves. And some encouragement to expect so much, they may draw even from this instance. This infirm woman, in order to bodily

cure, did apply herself to him; she came after him, as others did, for this purpose, and did, in a sort, put herself in the way of his healing influence. Now if any of you find your souls are yet held by the devil in worse bonds; apply yourselves to the merciful compassionate Jesus; there is hope in the case. Oh! will you not say so much to him for a soul in bondage? 'Lord, loose this poor soul of mine, that Satan hath bound for so many sad years.' Do but labour to know you are bound; to feel your bonds. Whatsoever there is of prevailing sin in you, it is a bond by which the devil holds your souls. "The wicked are held in the cords of their own iniquities,"[1] and sins are said to be the works of Satan, from which it is the design of the Redeemer to loose us. "The Son of God was for this purpose manifested, that he might destroy,"—we read; it is, "that he might *dissolve* the works of the devil:" as much as to say, that he might release and unbind souls that the devil as yet holds in fast bonds. And you may find you are so bound, when upon self-reflection you take notice you are ordinarily restrained from what you should do, against the light and conviction of your own minds and judgments: that is, you find, if you reflect, a conviction hath taken place in your consciences, you ought to love God; but there is with you no such motion of soul, no inclination towards him: you ought, in a stated course, to pray, and pour out your soul to him; but you are bound, you cannot offer at it, you have no liberty for it, your terrene inclination or love to vanity plucks you back: you ought to walk in the ways of God; but you are fettered, you cannot move a foot! you ought to do the works of God; but you are manacled, you cannot stir a hand. Are you so bound, and will you not know it? What! never feel your bonds? When once they are felt, you will soon begin to cry and supplicate. And if once you shall be brought seriously and incessantly to supplicate, it may be hoped the release will follow. Was our Lord so compassionate towards infirm bodies, in the

[1] Prov. v. 22.

days of his flesh in this world; and do we think he, above, is less compassionate to souls? Can it be thought heaven hath altered him to your disadvantage? Is he less kind, benign, and less apt to do good, now he is enthroned in glory? Why should you not believe he will give release unto your captived, embondaged souls, if you implore his help and mercy with seriousness, and insist upon it, and do not give him over? Say to him, "Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me;" for do you not know it is his office? "The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of prisons to them that are bound."[1] What! will you be bound all your days, and never lift up a cry to the great Redeemer and Saviour of souls, to give you release? How deservedly should these bonds end with you in the chains, wherein the devils themselves shall for ever be bound with you!

V. We may collect, there is an awful regard due to the Sabbath-day. When our Lord justifies the cure now wrought on their Sabbath, only on this account, that it was an act of mercy towards a daughter of Abraham; by the exception of such a case he strengthens the general rule, and intimates so holy a day should not, upon light occasions, be otherwise employed than for the proper end of its appointment. Though our *day* be not the same, the business of it in great part is, by the reason given in the fourth commandment: which being placed among the rest of those 'Ten Words,' so many ways remarkably distinguished from the other laws given the Jews, and signifying that these were intended not to them alone, but to mankind, and given upon a reason common to man,—the words also not necessarily signifying more than there should be a seventh day kept as sacred to God, reserving it to after significations of his pleasure to mark out and signalize this or that day, as he should see fit,—and our Saviour having told us expressly, 'The Sabbath was made for man,' that is, as men, not for Jews,

[1] Isaiah lxi. 1.

as Jews:—these considerations taken together, with many more, (not fit to be here mentioned,) do challenge a very great regard to the day, which we have cause to think it is the will of God we should keep as our Sabbath.

VI. That there is somewhat of privilege due, by gracious vouchsafement and grant, to the children of Abraham, to Abraham's seed; that is, to speak by analogy, to the children of covenanted parents. Abraham is considerable here, as being under that notion,—a father; whosoever of you therefore are the children of such as were "of the faith of Abraham," and you are now come to that adult state wherein you are capable of transacting with God for yourselves, and wherein the *transitus* is made from minority to maturity,—if now you own the God of your fathers, if you will now say, my father's God shall be my God, "he keeps mercy for thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments:" that is, if there were a *thousand* generations of such;—generations being spoken of so immediately before, namely, that he would "visit iniquity upon them that hate him, to the *third* and *fourth* generation, but show mercy to them that love him, and keep his commandments, unto a thousand generations," that is, to never so many. If you will not, when now grown up, disavow your father's God, if you will avow and own him, and devote yourselves to him, he will be your God, as well as theirs. Here is now the privilege due to Abraham's children, or to the children of covenanted parents. God has an early preventive interest in them, upon which they may lay their claim to him as their God, if they will but now give up themselves to him and stand to his covenant. But if you will not do so, but slight and reject the God of your fathers, then your birth-privilege can signify nothing to you; then "think not to say with yourselves, We have Abraham to our father," *as those* in that third of Matthew's Gospel; for God will never want children; "he is able of stones to raise up children to Abraham,"—as much as to say, rather stones than you. And then indeed, upon a true account,

Abraham is none of your father; as our Lord Jesus tells the Jews, if you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. You do so and so, "this did not Abraham."[1] Pray consider what Abraham was, and how he lived on earth like an inhabitant of heaven, as an heir of the heavenly country; his business was to "seek the better country, that is, the heavenly; wherefore God was not ashamed to be called his God."[2] But if you will go from day to day grovelling in the dust of the earth, this did not Abraham. If you will spend your lives in the pursuit of vanity and trifles, this did not Abraham. There is a great privilege belonging, by gospel grant, unto the children of covenanted parents, if they do not forfeit it by neglecting, and practically disavowing their father's God.

VII. But I further infer hence, that since this compassion has a real, though not a principal, hand in the release that is given to them that belong to God,—in whatsoever way they are released,—from all their infirmities, and ails, and afflictions in this world; it very much becomes, and much concerns, all the children of Abraham patiently to wait for it in God's own way. Patiently, I say, in God's own way wait for it. The children of Abraham shall be loosened sooner or later, and in one way or other, though very long, though so many years, bound by such and such afflicting distempers.

You have a great instance of this kind in that daughter of Abraham, whom God hath called away from us. In all that long exercise, the main thing she was ever wont to insist upon, was that in all this affliction she might gain patience, submission, and instruction. And in her later time, when she drew nearer to eternity, was more in view of it,—*that* was the great subject wherewith she entertained herself; and was conversant much with somewhat more lately written upon that subject, as by Mr. Shower, now known to most of you, and by another author. And her last entertainment, as I have been told—as to helps from creatures in any such

[1] John viii. 39, 40. [2] Heb. xi. 16.

kind—was the repetition of what some of you have heard concerning "the Emmanuel;" wherewith she formerly pleased herself as being, it is likely, much habituated in the temper of her spirit to the thoughts of Him; that having, by agreement with her pious consort, been their motto[1] at their first coming together, "Emmanuel, God with us."

VIII. I shall only add one instruction more, to shut up all; —that since our Lord Jesus hath such an agency, and even with compassion, in the release of those that do belong to him from their afflicting infirmities; we should all of us labour, with a due and right frame and disposition of spirit, to behold any such releasement. It is a great matter to be able to behold instances of that kind, with a right frame of mind and spirit. If one be released, by recovery, into ease, health, and strength in this world; it is easily and readily made matter of joy. Is one recovered out of a long and languishing sickness, friends and relations behold it with great complacency and gladness of heart. But if a godly friend be released by dying, truly we can hardly make ourselves believe that this *is* a release, or so *valuable* a release; so much are we under the government of sense, so little doth that faith signify with us or do its part, that is the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we see not. No! This is to go with us for no release. We look only upon the sensible, that is, upon the gloomy part of such a dispensation; when such a one is gone, released, set at liberty (as a bird out of the cage or the snare) we can hardly tell how to consider it as a release, we will not be induced to apprehend it so. There are no dispositions, no deportments commonly that suit such an apprehension. And oh! how unbecoming and incongruous a thing, when Christ is, in that way, about releasing such a one—to have a holy soul, just upon the confines of a glorious blessed eternity, compassed about with sighs, sobs, tears, and lamentations! How great an incongruity! I have many

[1] The posy on their wedding ring.

times thought with myself, the love and kindness of friends and relations is very pleasant in life, but grievous at death. It is indeed in some respects a very desirable thing, if God shall vouchsafe it, to die with one's friends about one. It may be one may need some little bodily relief, in those last hours; besides that, some proper thoughts may be suggested by them, to mingle with one's own. And if God afford the use of reason, and speech, and the supply of his own Spirit, one may possibly, in this last juncture, be a means of some good to them. One may possibly say that that may abide with them, and be of future advantage to them. But in other respects,—if the related friendly by-standers cannot duly temper themselves,—if they are apter to receive or do more hurt than good,—if Christians do not labour to show a truly Christian spirit in such a case,—their presence has very little eligible in it. And, indeed, the deportment even of those that profess Christianity, about their deceasing godly friends, is such for the most part as if the foundations of all religion were shaken with them; and as if they had a design to shake them too, if possible, in such with whom they are now to part;—as if it were to be called in question, whether what God hath said concerning another world, and the blessed state of the innumerable and holy assembly above, be true or no, or were not doubted to be false and a solemn fiction, invented to delude mortals here on earth!

It is little considered how opposite such a temper of spirit, as commonly appears in us, is to the very design of all Christianity. For doth not the whole of Christianity terminate upon eternity, and upon another state and world? Now do but consider the inconsistencies that are to be found in this case, between the carriage and temper of many that profess Christianity, and their very profession itself. They acknowledge, they own, that the design of Christ's appearing here in this world and of his dying upon the cross, was to "bring us to God," to "bring many sons to glory." They grant that this is not to be done all at once, not all in a day; but it is to be done by degrees. Here he takes up

one, and there another; leaving others still to transmit religion and continue it on to the end of time. So far they agree with our common Lord, and seem to approve the Divine determinations in all these steps of his procedure. But yet for all this, if they might have their own will, Christ should not have one to ascend to him, of those for whom he died, and himself ascended, to open heaven for them, and to prepare a place for their reception, as their Forerunner there. I say not one to ascend after him; for they take up with a general approving of this design of his. 'Very well;' say they, 'it is fitly ordered, his method is wise, and just, and kind, and let him take them that belong to him, when he thinks fit; only let him excuse my family; let him take whom he will, only let him touch no relation of mine; not my husband, wife, child, brother, sister; take whom he will, but let all mine alone. I agree to all he shall do well enough, only let him allow me my exception.' But if every one be of this temper and resolution for themselves and theirs, according to this tendency and course of things, he shall have none at all to ascend; none "to bring with him," when he returns. Those that are dead in Jesus, he is to bring with him. No, he should be solitary, and unattended for all them. They, and all their relations would be immortal upon earth. How ill doth this agree and accord with the Christian scheme and model of things!

But you will say, What! would I persuade you to be indifferent, and not to love and care for your relatives, or be unwilling to part with them? No. All that I persuade to is, that there be a mixture in your temper, and such a mixture as that the prevailing ingredient therein may agree with the stronger and weightier reason. It is not that I would have love extinguished among relatives, but I would have it moderated and subdued to that degree as to admit of being governed by superior, greater, and nobler considerations. Do you think Christ did expect or design that his disciples should not love him? And yet he tells them: "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the

Father."[1] And who in all this world could ever have such a loss, as they of him, dwelling in flesh among them? Yet, says he, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father." And when the apostle, visibly tending towards death, by the prediction given concerning him,[1] said to the disciples round about him: "What mean ye, to weep, and to break my heart? I am ready, not to be bound only, but to die for the name of Jesus;" if there had not been a faulty excess in the affection they expressed, certainly he would not have rebuked it, he would not have blamed what he thought not blameworthy.

In short, it were desirable—if God see good—to die amidst the pleasant friends and relatives, who were not ill pleased that we lived; that living and dying breath might mingle and ascend together in prayers and praises to the blessed Lord of heaven and earth, the God of our lives; if then we could part with consent, a rational and a joyful consent. Otherwise, to die with ceremony, to die amongst the fashionable bemoanings and lamentations, as if we despaired of futurity; one would say, with humble submission to the Divine pleasure, 'Lord! let me rather die alone, in perfect solitude, in some unfrequented wood, or on the top of some far remote mountain; where none might interrupt the solemn transactions between thy glorious, blessed self, and my joyfully departing, self-resigning soul!'

But in all this we must refer ourselves to God's holy pleasure; who will dispose of us, living and dying, in the best, the wisest, and the kindest way.

[1] John xiv. 28. [2] Acts xxi. 13.

A FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. MARGARET BAXTER.

TO THE VERY REVEREND

MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

Sir,

When you assigned unto me that part, not of forming a memorial for your excellent deceased consort,—which is reserved to the fittest hand,—but of instructing the people upon the occasion of her decease; this text of Scripture occurring also to my thoughts, (which I reckoned might sufficiently agree with the design you generally recommended to me, though I am sensible how little the prosecution did so,) it put me upon considering with how great disadvantage we set ourselves, at any time, to reason against bodily inclination; the great antagonist we have to contend against in all our ministerial labours! An attempt which, if a higher power set not in with us, looks like the opposing of our faint breath to the steady course of a mighty river!

I have often thought of Cicero's wonder: 'That since we consist of a mind and a body, the skill of curing and preserving the body is so admired as to have been thought a Divine invention; that which refers to the mind is neither so desired, before it be found out, nor so cultivated afterwards, nor is approved and acceptable to so many: yea, is even to the most, suspected and hateful!'

Even the tyrant Phalaris tells one, in an epistle, (though by way of menace,) that whereas a good physician may cure a distempered body, death is the only physician for a distempered mind.

It works not indeed a universal cure. But of such on whom it may, how few are there that count not the *remedy* worse than

the *disease!* Yet how many thousands are there, that for greater (hoped) bodily advantages afterwards, endure much more pain and trouble than there is in dying!

We are a mysterious sort of creatures. Yet I acknowledge the wisdom of God is great and admirable, in planting in our natures so strong a love of this bodily life, without which *the best* would be more impatient of living on earth so long as God thinks it requisite they should; and to *the worst*, death would not be a sufficiently formidable punishment; and consequently human laws and justice would be, in great part, eluded.

And the same Divine wisdom is not less admirable, in providing there should so generally be so much of mutual love as doth obtain among near friends and relatives; for thereby their cohabitation and mutual offices towards each other are made more pleasant and easy; which is a great compensation for the concomitant evil,—that by the same love their parting with one another cannot but be rendered grievous.

But for you, who live so much upon the borders and in the pleasant view of the other state; the one separation is, I doub not, much easier to your sense, and the other to your forethoughts, than they are with the most. A perfect indifferency towards this present bodily state and life, is, in mine eyes, a most covetable thing and my daily aim; wherein I entreat your prayers may assist

Your most respectful, though most unworthy

Fellow-servant, and expectant in the work

And hope of the gospel,

J. H.

A FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. MARGARET BAXTER.

2 COR. v. 8.

"WE ARE CONFIDENT, I SAY, AND WILLING RATHER TO BE ABSENT FROM THE BODY, AND TO BE PRESENT WITH THE LORD."

THE solemn face of this assembly seems to tell me that you already know the present, special occasion of it; and that I scarce need to tell any of you, that our worthy, honoured friend, Mrs. Baxter is dead. You have, it is like—most of you—often met her in this place, when her pleased looks were wont to show what delight she took to have many share in those great advantages wherein she had a more peculiar interest; you are now to meet her here no more, but are met, yourselves, to lament together that our world hath lost so desirable an inhabitant; and to learn, as I hope you design, what so instructive an occasion shall of itself, or as it may be improved, serve to teach us.

It doth of itself most obviously teach the common document, that we, who are of the same make and mould, must all die too; and our own prudence should hereupon advance one step further, and apprehend it a most covetable thing, that the temper of our minds might comply with this unalterable state of our case; and that we be in a disposition, since we

must die, to die willingly and with our own consent. Nothing can be more irrational or unhappy than to be engaged in a continual quarrel with Necessity,—which will prevail and be too hard for us at last. No course is so wise in itself or good for us, as to be reconciled to what we cannot avoid; to bear a facile yielding mind towards a determination which admits of no repeal.

And the subject, now to be insisted on, may help us to improve the sad occasion to this very important purpose; and show us that dying, which cannot be willed for itself, may be joined with somewhat else which may and ought to be so; and in that conjunction become the object of a rational and most complacential willingness: a subject recommended to me, though not the special text, by one, than whom I know no man that was better able to make a fit choice; as, in the present case, none could have that right to choose.

I cannot stay to discuss and open the most fruitful pleasant series of discourse in the foregoing verses, though there will be occasion to reflect somewhat upon it by and by; but, in the text, the apostle asserts two things concerning the temper of his spirit in reference to death: his confidence and complacency, *θαῤῥοῦμεν καὶ εὐδοκοῦμεν*.

I. His confidence, or his courage and fortitude. "We are confident, I say." He had said it before:[1] "We are always confident;" and assigned the cause: "knowing that while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord." And *he also* declared the kind of that knowledge—namely, which he had of that presence of the Lord, whereof he was deprived by being present in the body; that is, that it was the knowledge of faith, not of sight.[2] Now here he adds: "We are confident, I say." It notes a deliberate courage, and the fixedness of it; that it was not a sudden fit, a passion soon over. He had said above *θαῤῥοῦντες πάντοτε*, we are confident at all times; it was his habitual temper. And here the ingemination signifies *increase*, as if he had said: 'We grow more

[1] 2 Cor. v. 6. [2] Verse 7.

and more bold and adventurous, while we consider the state of our case, and what we suffer by our presence in the body. Sense of injury or damage heightens and adds an edge unto true valour. We would venture upon a thousand deaths, if the matter were left entirely to our own option, rather than be thus withheld any longer from the presence of our blessed Lord; a thing whereof nothing but duty to him could make us patient. We are not destitute of the fortitude to enable us even to rush upon death, without more ado, if he did say the word; but as yet he bids us stay, and *his* supreme and holy will must in all things determine *ours*. Therefore it is immediately subjoined in the midst of this high transport,[1] "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him, or well-pleasing to him," εὐάρεστοι αὐτῷ εἶναι. We less mind the pleasing ourselves, than him. We are indifferent to life or death, being in the body or out of it, in comparison of that; his pleasure is more to us than either.' Here the highest fortitude yields and submits itself. Otherwise, and for his own part, and as to what concerned his own inclination singly, and in the divided sense, the apostle to his confidence doth—

II. Add complacency. 'We are better pleased,' εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον. This is a distinct thing; a valiant man will venture upon wounds and death, but is not pleased with them; but in reference to so excellent an object and occasion, they must mingle, and the latter runs into the former. "We are willing rather," as we read it, "to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." The word which we read *willing*, signifies *to approve* or *like well*, not a merely judicious, but complacential approbation; the word whence comes the εὐδοκία often ascribed to God in Scripture, which signifies the high satisfaction he takes in all his purposes and determinations. The εὐδοκία τοῦ θελήματος,[2] is certainly no tautology, but speaks how perfectly and pleasingly he agrees, and, as it were, consents with himself, in all that ever he had

[1] 2 Cor. v. 9.

[2] Eph. i. 5.

resolved on.—This rather, says the apostle, is our εὐδοκία, the thing that would please us best, and wherein we should most highly satisfy ourselves. It would not be the matter of our submission only, or whereto we could yield, when we cannot help it; but of our highest joy and pleasure: according as we find it was with the psalmist[1] in the same case, which though it had a further meaning in reference to Christ, had a true meaning as to himself also: "Therefore my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in (SHEOL) the state of the dead, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption, but wilt show me the path of life;" and no matter though it lie through the dark shady vale, it leads however into that blessed presence of thine —the same with that in the text—"where is fulness of joy;" and unto that right hand, that high and honourable station, where "are pleasures for evermore."

Both these,—the apostle's courage and fortitude, and his complacency or well-pleasedness,—have express reference to the state of death, or of being absent from the body. The one respects it as a formidable, but superable, evil, the other as a desirable and most delectable good.

But both have reference to it in its concomitancy or tendency; namely, as "absence from the body" should be accompanied, or be immediately followed, with "being present with the Lord."

The sense therefore of the whole verse, may be fitly expressed thus:

That it is the genuine temper of holy souls, not only to venture with confidence upon the state of absence or separation from the body; but to choose it with great complacency and gladness, that they may be present with the Lord.

'Body' we are not here to understand so generally, as if he affected or counted upon a perpetual final state of separation from any body at all. No, the temper of his spirit had nothing in it so undutiful or unnatural; no such reluctation

[1] Ps. xvi.

or disposition to contend against the common lot of man, the law of human nature, and the comely order which the Author of our beings and of all nature, hath settled in the universe; that, whereas one sort of creatures that have life should be wholly confined to terrestrial bodies; another, quite exempt from them; ours should be a middle nature, between the angelical and the brutal: so as we should, with the former, partake of intellectual immortal spirit; and a mortal body made up and organized of earthly materials, with the latter: which yet we might also depose, and reassume,—changed and refined from terrene dross. The apostle's temper hath in it nothing of rebellion or regret against this most apt and congruous order and constitution; he had no impatient proud resentment of that gradual debasement and inferiority, that in this respect we are "made a little lower than the angels." When Porphyry tells us, in the Life of Plotinus, that he blushed as often as he thought of his being a *body*, it was agreeable enough to his notion of the pre-existence of the soul; that is, if it were true that the original state of human spirits was the same with that of angels—which this is no fit season to dispute against—and that by their own fault, some way or other, they lapsed and slid down into grosser matter, and were caught into vital union with it, there was just cause of shame indeed. Apuleius's transformation—which many of you know what it means—if it had been real, was not more ignominious.

But it appears the apostle affected not a state wherein he should be simply "naked, or unclothed" of any body at all; for he longs to be "clothed upon with his heavenly house."[1]

And whereas he tells us[2] that which he groaned for was, "not to be unclothed, but clothed upon;" that *being unclothed*, doth not mean the act, but the state; that is, that he did not covet or aspire to a perpetual final state of being naked, or without any body at all. For so he speaks:[3] "If so be," as we read, "that being clothed, we shall not be found naked."

[1] 2 Cor. v. 2. [2] Ver. 4. [3] Ver. 3.

The particle εἴγε admits to be read, *since that, inasmuch as, for truly;* and so the second and third verses will be connected thus: "In this,"[1]—that is, *for* this, namely for this cause, as ἐν often signifies causality; not in *this house*, for τούτῳ and οἰκία will not agree—" we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," that is, of heaven, or suitable to heaven; ἐξ denotes here, (as often,) the matter whereof a thing is formed and made; a body made up of a heavenly material; or, which is all one, an earthly body refined and transformed into such a one. And then he subjoins the reason why his desire is so conditioned and limited, or runs only in this particular current, to have,—not *no* body at all,—but only not such a body *as now*: he wishes to have a body made more habile and commodious, and fitter for the uses of a glorified soul, which hath its own more inward clothing peculiar to itself, in respect whereof that of *such* a body would be an additional one; a superinvestiture, as the word ἐπενδύσασθαι imports. His desire is thus limited and modified for this reason: "Inasmuch as, being thus clothed, we shall not be found naked,"[2] or without any body at all; which the law of our creation admits us not to affect or aspire unto. And therefore in qualifying our desire thus, we shall contain ourselves within our own bounds, and not offer at anything whereof humanity is, by the Creator's pleasure and constitution, incapable. Therefore he inculcates the same thing over again: "We groan not to be unclothed, but only to be clothed upon;"[3] where that *unclothed*, the thing he desired not, must signify the state and not the act only, is evident; in that *being clothed*, the thing which he did desire, must plainly be so understood. For was it only an entrance into glory he desired, and not continuance in a glorified state? Nor can this 'being unclothed' (much less) refer, as an act, to the *present* clothing of this earthly body, as if it were our being divested of that which he intended, in this fourth verse, as the thing he desired

[1] 2 Cor. v. 2. [2] Ver. 3. [3] Ver. 4.

not; for then the fourth verse would contradict this eighth, where he tells us he *did* desire it. The meaning then is, that he did not desire to be exempted from wearing a body, or to be without any at all. He did only covet to be absent from this body, gross and terrene as now it was, that he might be present with the Lord; with which he found being in such a body, and in the several accompanying circumstances of this bodily state, to be inconsistent.

Wherefore it was a terrestrial body, "the earthly house of this tabernacle,"[1] which he was now better pleased to quit upon this account.

And I say it is the genuine temper of a holy soul to be like-minded, not their constant, explicit, discernible sense. We must allow for accidents, as we shall note afterwards; but when they are themselves and in their right mind, and so far as the holy divine life doth prevail in them, this is their temper.

And now, that I may more fully open this matter to you, I shall,—

First. Endeavour to unfold, somewhat more distinctly, the state of the case in reference whereto good and holy souls are thus affected.

Second. Shall show you what is their true and genuine temper, or how it is that they stand affected in reference to that case.

Third. Shall discover how agreeable this temper is to the general frame and complexion of a holy soul; and then make such reflections upon the whole, as may be more especially useful to ourselves.

First. We are to take, as much as we can, a distinct view and state of the case. We see the apostle speaks by way of comparison, εὐδοκοῦμεν μᾶλλον, "we are willing rather." We are therefore to consider—that we may comprehend clearly the true state of this case—what the things are which he compares; and between which his mind might be supposed, as it

[1] As it is ver. 1.

were, to have been before, (at least in order of nature before,) in some suspense, till at last it come so complacentially to incline and be determined this one way. Take the account of the whole case in these particulars.

I. There are here two principal terms between which the motion and inclination of such a mind lies, from the one to the other:—The Lord and the body.

Both do as it were attract and draw, or are apt to do, two several ways. The Lord strongly draws on the one hand; and the body hangs on, and holds, and draws in as strongly to itself as it can, on the other.

The body as having us *present* in it. And how? not locally only, but in the way of vital union and communion with it.

And that shows how we are to understand being present with the Lord too; not by a mere local presence, but of more intimate vital union and commerce: where, as in the union between the soul and body, the more excellent communicates life, the other receives it; so it must be here.

Though now the Lord is present thus in some measure—which this attraction supposes—yet speaking comparatively, that presence is absence in respect of what we are to look for hereafter.

Both these unions are very mysterious, and both infer very strong and powerful drawing, or holding together of the things so united.

There is no greater mystery in nature than the union between the soul and body; that a mind and spirit should be so tied and linked with a clod of clay, that, while *that* remains in a due temper, it cannot by any art or power free itself! It can by an act of the will move a hand, or foot, or the whole body; but cannot move *from it* one inch. If it move hither and thither, or by a leap upward do ascend a little, the body still follows; it cannot shake or throw it off. We cannot take ourselves out; by any allowable means we cannot; nor by any at all (that are at least within mere human power) *as long* as the temperament lasts. While that

remains, we cannot go; if that fail, we cannot stay; though there be so many open avenues—could we suppose any material bounds to hem in or exclude a spirit—we cannot go out or in at pleasure. A wonderful thing! and I wonder we no more wonder at our own make and frame in this respect; that we do not, with reverent submissive adoration, discern and confess how far we are outwitted and overpowered by our wise and great Creator; that we not only cannot undo his work upon us in this respect, but that we cannot so much as understand it. What so much akin are a mind and a piece of earth, a clod and a thought, that they should be thus affixed to one another? or that there should be such a thing in nature as thinking clay?

But hereupon, what advantage hath this body upon the soul and spirit! In the natural union is grounded a moral one, of love and affection; which (on the soul's part) draws and binds it down with mighty efficacy.

Again, how mysterious and ineffable is the union of the Lord and the soul; and how more highly venerable, as this is a *sacred* mystery! And who would not admire at their proud disdainful folly, that while they cannot explain the union between the soul and body, are ready to jeer at *their* just, humble, and modest ignorance, that call this other a mystical union? or, because they know not what to make of it, would make nothing, and will not allow there should be any such thing, or would have it be next to nothing. Have those words no sense belonging to them, or not a great sense, "But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit?"[1] And, upon this supernatural union also (be it what it will) methinks the binding and drawing power of love should not be less!

II. We must conceive in our minds, as distinctly as we can, the peculiar adjuncts of each of these more principal terms; that is, on the part of the body, first, we are to consider a sensible, a grossly corporeal world, to which this body doth

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

connaturalize us, and whereto we are attempered by our being in the body, and living this bodily life. This body, while we live in it, is the *terminus uniens*, the *medium*, the unitive bond between us and it. In this world we find ourselves encompassed with objects that are suitable, grateful, and entertaining to our bodily senses, and the several principles, perceptions, and appetites that belong to the bodily life; and these things familiarize and habituate us to this world, and make us, as it were, one with it. There is, particularly, 'a bodily people,' as is intimated in the text, that we are associated with by our being in the body. The words ἐνδημῆσαι and ἐκδημῆσαι in this verse, (and the same are used in the 6th and 9th,) signify there is such a people, of which we are, and from which we would be dissociated; ἔνδημος is *civis, incola,* or *indigena,* an inhabitant or native among this or that people; as ἔκδημος is *peregrinus,* one that lives abroad and is severed from the people he belonged unto. The apostle considers himself, while in the body, as living among such a sort of people as dwell in bodies, a like sort of people to himself; and would be no longer a home-dweller with these, but travel away from them, to join and be a dweller with another people.

For also, on the other hand, he considers "with the Lord" an invisible world, where He resides; and an incorporeal people, He presides over: so that the case here is, are we willing to be dispeopled from this bodily sort of people, and peopled with that incorporeal sort, the world and community of spirits?

III. It is further to be considered in this case, that we are related both ways,—related to the body and related to the Lord; to the one people and the other; the one claims an interest in us, and so doth the other. We have many earthly alliances, it is true, and we have many heavenly; we are related to both worlds, and have affairs lying in both.

And now what mighty pleadings might the case admit, on the one hand and the other? Were the body, apart, capable of pleading for itself, to this effect it must bespeak the soul:

'I am thy body, I was made and formed for thee, and (some way) by thee. Thou hast so long inhabited and dwelt with me and in me. Thou art my soul, my life, my strength; if thou be absent, I am a carcass and fall to dirt; and thou wilt be a maimed thing, and scarce thy whole self.' But though it cannot dictate, and do not utter, such words, nature doth itself plead more strongly than words can.

And again, how much more potently might the Lord plead for his having the soul more closely united and intimately conversant with himself! 'Thou art one of the souls I have loved and chosen, which were given to me, and for which I offered up my own soul. I have visited thee in thy low and abject state, "said to thee in thy blood, Live," have inspired thee with a heavenly, sacred, divine life; the root and seminal principle of a perfect, glorious, eternal life. Let this body drop, which hath been long thy burden; let it fall and die, it matters not! Yet since thou lovest it, I will restore it thee again, pure and glorious, like mine own. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."[1] Never fear to venture *thyself* with me, nor to commit *thy body* to my after-care.'

And now all the question will be,—which alleges the more considerable things? and the matter will be estimated, as the temper of the soul is. An earthly sordid soul, when the overture is made to it of such a translation, will be ready to say, as the Shunamite[2] did to the prophet, when he offered "to speak for her to the king,"—perhaps that her husband might be called to court, and made a great man,—"I dwell among my own people;" an answer that in her case well expressed the true greatness of a contented mind, but in this case nothing more mean: 'I am well where I am, and dwell among a people like myself.' So saith the degenerate, abject soul, sunk into a deep oblivion of its own country: 'Here I dwell a fixed inhabitant of this world, among a corporeal people, where I make one.' And we find how it is with this

[1] John xi. 25. [2] 2 Kings iv. 13.

sort of people; each one charms another, and they grow familiar, have mutual ties upon one another, and there is a loathsomeness to part: especially as here, in this lower world, we are variously disposed, and cast into several mutual relations to one another; husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, all dwelling in bodies alike, cohabiting, eating and drinking daily, and conversing, together. These are great and sensible endearments, by which the minds of men become as it were knit and united to one another. How are men's spirits fixed to their own countries! *Nescio quâ natale solum dulcedine*—it is by an inexpressible pleasure and sweetness, that the people of one country are as it were linked and held together.

But would not a heavenly, new-born soul say, 'No, this is none of my country; I "seek a better," and am here but "a pilgrim and stranger;" this is none of my people.' So it was with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that conversed in the earthly Canaan, but "as in a strange country;" their mind being gone towards that other which they sought. And accordingly you find it said of each of them, in their story, when they quite left this world (as also of Moses and Aaron afterwards) that they were "gathered to their people;" a people that were more their own. And surely, as God, "who was not ashamed to be called their God," is "not the God of the dead, but of the living;" we must understand this was not the congregation of the dead to which these were gathered, otherwise than in a low, relative sense,—as to us only and our world. Holy men, as they die out of one world, are born into another; to associate with them that dwell in light, and be joined to a glorious community above, "the general assembly, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect;" where all love and adore, praise and triumph together.

IV. It is again to be taken into the state of this case, that we have, one way or other, actual present notices of both the states, which both sorts of objects, that stand in this competition, belong unto: of the one by *sense* and experience; we so

know what it is to live in the body, and in a sensible world, and among a corporeal people: of the other by *faith*, by believing as we are told, by one that we are sure can have no design or inclination to deceive us. There are "many mansions," saith he, "in my Father's house;" as good accommodations, as suitable society,—and sufficiently numerous, which the "many mansions" implies,—to be sure, as any you have met with here. Faith is, in this case, to serve us instead of eyes; it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;"[1] as we have the notion of a country where we have not been, by the description of a person whom we can trust, and that we think intends not to abuse us by forgeries and false representations. In reference to *this* country, we walk and guide ourselves by sight, in our converses and affairs wherein we have to do with it; as to that *other*, by faith.[2]

V. Yet further, it is to be considered that this body, and this bodily people and world, have the present possession of us. And though the spiritualized mind do as it were step forth, and place itself between both, when it is to make its choice; yet the objects of the one sort are much nearer, the other are far distant, and much more remote.

VI. That it cannot but be apprehended that though the one sort of things hath the faster hold, the other sort are things of greater value; the one hath the more entire present possession of us, the other, the better right. Thus we see the case stated..

Second. We are next to show what the temper is of a holy soul; that is, its proper and most genuine temper in reference to this supposed state of the case. We are "willing rather," or have a more complacential inclination, to be unpeopled from the body, and this bodily sort of people; and to be peopled with the Lord, and that sort of incorporeal people over which he more immediately presides in the upper world. He speaks comparatively, as the case requires; and because all comparison is founded in somewhat absolute, there-

[1] Heb. xi. 1. [2] It is implied 2 Cor. v. 7.

fore a simple disposition, *both* ways, is supposed. Whence then,—

I. This temper is not to despise and hate the body; it imports no disdainful aversion to it, or to this present state.

II. Nor is it an impetuous precipitant tendency towards the Lord, impatient of delay, mutinous against the Divine disposal; or that declines present duty and catches at the βραβεῖον, the crown and prize, before the prescribed race be run out. A holy man is at once dutiful and wise; as a servant, he refuses not the obedience of life, and as a wise man,[1] embraces the gain of death.

III. But it is considerate,—the effect of much foregoing deliberation and of a thorough perspection of the case; εἰδότες,[2] knowing or considering that "while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." This choice is not made blindly, and in the dark.

IV. It is very determinate and full, being made up of the mixture of fortitude and complacency, as was said; the one whereof copes with the evil of being severed from the body; the other entertains the good of being present with the Lord. Therefore this is the sense of a pious soul in the present case: it is as much as saying, 'I do indeed love this body well, and reckon it a grievous thing to be severed from it, if that part of the case be singly considered, and alone by itself; but considering it in comparison with the other part, what is this body to me? What is it as an object of love, in comparison of being with the Lord? What is death to me as an object of fear, in comparison of being absent from the Lord? which is a death many thousand times more deadly than the other.'

THIRD. The agreeableness of this temper to the general frame and complexion of a holy soul as such; which will appear, if we consider,—

I. What sort of frame or impression in the general *that* is, that doth distinguish a sincerely pious person from another man.

[1] *Ambros.* de Bono Mortis. [2] 2 Cor. v. 6.

II. The more eminent principles in particular that are constituent of it, and do as it were compose and make it up.

I. The general frame of a holy soul, as such, is natural to it. It is not an artificial thing, a piece of mechanism, a lifeless engine; nor a superficial, an external, form, an evanid impression. It is the effect of a creation, as Scripture often speaks, by which the man becomes a new creature, and hath a nature peculiar to him as other creatures have; or of regeneration, by which he is said to be born anew: which forms of speech, whatever they have of different signification, do agree in this, that they signify a certain nature to be the thing produced. This nature is said to be "Divine,"[1] somewhat "born of God,"—as it is expressed, 1 John v. 4, and in many places more. And it is an intellectual nature; or the restored rectitude of such a being. Now who can think but what is so peculiarly from God,—a touch and impress from him upon an intelligent subject,—should with design, choice, and complacency tend to him, and make the soul do so? Especially, when it is so purposely designed for remedy of the apostacy wherein men are revolted and gone off from him? Will he suffer himself to be defeated in a design, upon which he is so industriously intent? Or is it supposable the all-wise God should so mistake himself, as to do such a work upon the spirit of man on set purpose for an end which it is no way apt to serve; yea, and when he now takes him in hand a second time? Nor can it be but this impression of God upon the soul, must have principal reference to our final state. It is a kind of nature, and must therefore tend to what is most perfect in its own kind.

But we need not reason, in a matter wherein the word of God so plainly unfolds the scope and the success of this his own work. By it we are said to be "alive to God, through Jesus Christ,"[2] to turn and move and act towards him, as many Scriptures speak; and towards him, as he is most perfectly to be served and enjoyed, in the most perfect state of life.

[1] 2 Pet. i. 4. [2] Rom. vi. 11.

We are said to be begotten again "to a lively hope,"[1]—where hope is taken objectively, as the following words show; "to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." And when, elsewhere, it had been said, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him,"[2] there is immediately subjoined[3] a description of the future blessedness; whereto it is presently added,[4] "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure:" implying the hope of that blessed state to be connate, implanted as a vital principle of the new and divine nature. And all hope, we know, involves desire in it; which is here intimated to be so powerful and prevailing as to shape and form a man's whole course to an agreeable tenor: which it could not do, if hope were not superadded to desire; for no man pursues an end whereof he despairs. And what else is living religion, but a tendency to blessedness? a seeking "honour, glory, and immortality," by a "patient continuance in well-doing."[5]

Nor need we look further than this context for evidence that this Divine impression upon the soul hath this reference; for when[6] the apostle had avowed the fervour of his desire after that state wherein "mortality should be swallowed up of life," he immediately adds,[7] "Now he that hath wrought us to this selfsame thing, is God," etc. And indeed, after that transforming touch, the great business of such a soul, in this world, is but a dressing itself for the Divine presence; a preparation for that state, wherein "we are to be for ever with the Lord." And it is not only an incongruity, but an inconsistency,—not only that which is not fit, but not possible,—that a man should ever design that as his end, which he cares not ever to attain; or that for his last end, which he doth not supremely desire.

II. If we consider particular principles that belong to this holy Divine nature, the more noble and eminent are faith and love.

[1] 1 Pet. i. 3. [2] 1 John ii. 29. [3] Chap. iii. 1, 2.
[4] Ver. 3. [5] Rom. ii. 7. [6] 2 Cor. v. 4. [7] Ver. 5.

The former is the perceptive, visive principle; the other the motive and fruitive. And these, though they have their other manifold references, have yet, both, their final, to that state of absence from this body and presence with the Lord; the one eyeing, the other coveting it, as that wherein the soul is to take up its final rest.

Here some consideration should be had of objections that some may be apt to make use of, to shift off the urgency of this truth, and excuse the unsuitable temper of their spirits to it.

1. That they are unassured about their states Godward; and how can they be willing to die and be absent from the body, or not be afraid of the Lord's presence, whom they may, for aught they know, find an angry vindictive Judge, when they appear before him?

Answer. This, which is the most considerable objection that the matter admits of, if it were directly pointed against this truth as it hath been laid down, would answer itself. For it is not dying simply that is the object of this inclination; but dying conjunctly with "being with the Lord," in his blessed joyous presence. Do not therefore divide the object, and that objection is no objection. You are unwilling to die, and be banished the Divine presence; but are you unwilling to die and enjoy it? Or, upon supposition you should, are you willing? This is all that we make characteristical and distinguishing. Where there is only an aversion to leave this bodily life and state, upon a fear we shall not be admitted into that blessed presence; there is only an accidental obstruction to the more explicit, distinct, and discernible exertions of desire this way; which obstruction, if it be removed, the soul would then follow the course which the Divine and holy principle in it doth naturally incline to. But the mortal token is, when there is no such doubt, and yet there is still a prevailing aversion; when men make no question, if they die they shall go to God, and yet they are not willing to go. In the former case, there is a supreme desire of being with God, only suspended; take off that

suspension, and that desire runs its natural course. In the other case, there is no desire at all. And the difference is, as between a living man that would fain go to such a place, but he is held and therefore goes not; and one that is not held, but is dead, and cannot stir at all. For the life of the soul towards God is love; aversion therefore is—not an absolute, but—respective death, or *quoad hoc;* a death towards *him;* or, as to this thing,—namely, being with him.

2. As for the objection of being more serviceable to children, friends, relations, or the glory of God in the world, and his church in it; upon which last account this apostle,[1] though he express a desire "to be dissolved and to be with Christ," yet "is in a strait," and seems also very well pleased "to abide in the flesh" a longer time: He can himself best judge of our serviceableness. The meaning is, not that we should be willing to leave the body before He would have us, but that we should not be unwilling then.

And because we know not when his time will be, and it may be presently for aught we know, we should be always willing and desirous, upon that supposition. Our desire herein should not be absolute and peremptory, but subordinate, and apt to be determined by his will; which can determine nothing but what will be most for his own glory, and for their best good who belong to him.

But as to this instance of the apostle, we must consider what there was peculiar in the apostle's case, and what is common or ought to be, to all serious Christians. There is no doubt there was this more peculiar to him, and to persons in such a capacity and station as his was; namely, as he was an apostle, he was one that had seen the Lord, which was a qualification for the more special work of that office; whereupon he was, as an eye-witness, to testify of his resurrection; upon which so great a stress lay in asserting the truth of the Christian religion, and in propagating it with the greater assurance in the world. To testify as an apostle, therefore,

[1] Phil. i. 22—24.

could not be done by one of a following age. And it is very probable when he expresses to the Philippians,[1] his knowledge he "should abide and continue yet longer with them all,"—that is, with the Christian church in the world, for we cannot suppose he was to continue at Philippi,—for the furtherance of the common cause of the Christian faith, which was their "common joy," and which would no doubt be increased intensively and extensively at once, he had some secret intimation that all his work in this kind was not yet over. Nor were such monitions and advertisements unfrequent with the apostles, that specially related to the circumstances of their work. And so entirely was he devoted to the Christian interest, that wherein he saw he might be so peculiarly serviceable to it, he expresses a *well-pleasedness* to be so, as well as a *confidence* that he should: as we all ought to do, in reference to any such significations of the Divine will concerning us, if they were afforded to us.

But as to what there is in this instance, that is common and imitable to the generality of Christians, it is no other than what we press from the text we have in hand: "A desire to depart, and be with Christ, as that which is far better" for us; submitted to the regulation of the Divine will as to the time of our departure, and accompanied with a cheerful willingness to serve him here to our uttermost in the mean time.

But we have withal little reason to think we can do God greater service, or glorify him more *here*, than *above*. There is indeed other service to be done below, which is necessary in its own kind, and must, and shall, be done by some or other. But is our service fit, in point of excellency and value, to be compared with that of glorified spirits in the upper regions? We serve God by doing his will,—which is sure most perfectly done above. And our glorifying him, is to acknowledge and adore his glorious excellencies: not to add the glory to him which he hath not, but to celebrate and magnify that which

[1] Phil. i. 25.

he hath: whereof certainly the large minds of glorified creatures are far more capable.

He never needs hands for any work he hath to do, but can form instruments as he pleases. And what is our little point of earth or any service that can be performed by us here, in comparison of the spacious heavens and the noble employments of those glorious orders of creatures above, which all bear their parts in the great affairs of the vast and widely-extended heavenly kingdom? We might as well suppose that because there is in a prince's family employment below-stairs for cooks, and butlers, or such like underlings; that therefore their service is more considerable than that of great officers and ministers of state.

3. And for what may be thought by some, that this seems an *unnatural* inclination; we must understand what we say, and what our own nature is, when we talk of what is natural or unnatural to us. Ours is a *compounded* nature; that is not simply unnatural that is contrary to an inferior nature, and agreeable to a superior. The most deeply fundamental law of the intellectual nature in us was, to be most addicted to the supreme good; the apostacy of this world from God and its lapse into carnality is its most unnatural state. To have an inclination to the body is natural, but to be more addicted to *it* than to God, is most contrary to the sincere dictates of original, pure, and primitive nature.

There are now, for our use, many things to be inferred.

I. We see here, from the immediate connexion between "being absent from the body" and "present with the Lord," there is no place for the intervening sleep of the separate soul. Can such a presence with the Lord, as is here meant, consist with sleeping? or is sleeping more desirable than the converse with him our present state admits? But of this much is said elsewhere.

II. Death is not so formidable a thing as we commonly fancy. "We are confident and willing rather!" There is a fortitude that can oppose the terrors of death, and overcome. How many have we known die triumphing!

III. We see that men of spiritual minds, have another notion of that which we call self or personality, than is vulgar and common. For who are the 'we' that speak of being absent from the body, and present with the Lord? The body seems excluded that notion, which we know cannot be absent from itself. How like in sound is this to *animus cujusque is quisque*, or, *'that the soul is the man!'* I would not indeed drive this so high as some Platonists are wont to do, as if the man were nothing else but a soul sometimes using a body: nor do therefore think the body is no more to him, than our clothes to the body, because the apostle in this context uses that *similitude;* for that is not to be conceived otherwise, than, as is usual in such illustrations, with *dissimilitude.* A vital union must be acknowledged; only neither is it agreeable with their self-debasing thoughts, that seem to make the body the more considerable part of themselves; that measure good and evil by it, as if what were grateful to the body were simply good for them, and that which offends the body simply evil; that speak or think of themselves as if they were all body, forget that there is belonging to them an ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος, as well as an ὁ ἔξω, an *inner man,* and an *outer;* that the latter may be "decaying," when the other "is renewed day by day;"[1] that the "Father of our spirits" may often see cause to let our flesh suffer and, at last, perish for the advantage of our spirits;[2] so distinct are their interests and gratifications, and sometimes inconsistent. When men make therefore this bodily brutal self their centre and end, how sordid and unchristian is their temper! And how reprovable by some more noble-minded pagans, that had better learned the precept inculcated by some of them, of 'reverencing themselves!' of whom we find one,[3] speaking with a sort of disdain: 'Is this body, I?' Another[4] saying: 'He might be killed and not hurt;' and upbraiding to his friends their ignorance, when they inquired how he would be buried: 'As if he could be buried, who,'

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 16. [2] Heb. xii. 9, 10. [3] *Epict.* [4] *Socrat.*

he said, 'should be gone far enough out of their hands.' Another[1]: that the tyrant, 'that made him to be beaten to death with iron mallets, might break that vessel of his, but himself he could not touch.'

IV. We learn that when God removes any of our dear godly friends and relatives out of the body, though he displease us, he highly pleases them; for it is that they desire rather. And we are sure he pleases himself, for what can induce him or make it possible to him to do anything against his own pleasure? We are too apt to consider our own interest and satisfaction apart from theirs and God's, in such cases. And hence is that too vulgar and practical error among many very serious Christians, that when such as are dear to them are taken away, they reckon their thoughts are to be principally employed in considering such a thing as afflictive or punitive to them. It is true that the affliction of that, as well as of any other kind, should put us upon very serious inquiry and search what the sin is that may more especially have deserved it. But *that* ought upon all occasions to be principally considered in any case, that is *principal*. As God did not make such a creature principally to please me, so nor doth he take away such a one principally to displease me. God's interest is supreme, their own next; mine comes after both the other. Therefore when the stream of thoughts and affections hath run principally, in such a case, upon our own affliction, it is time to check it, and begin to consider with some pleasure, how the Lord and that translated soul are now pleased in one another! He hath his end upon his own creature, and it hath its end and rest in him.

V. We see the admirable power of Divine grace, that it prevails even against the natural love of this bodily life: not where discontent and weariness of life contribute, but even where there is a willingness to live too, upon a valuable consideration,—as this apostle doth elsewhere express himself; namely, in the place before noted. And how easily the

[1] *Anaxarch.*

Divine pleasure could reconcile him to life, notwithstanding what is said in the text, is sufficiently signified in the words immediately following it. And the effect is permanent, not a sudden transport, wherein many are induced to throw away their lives, upon much lower motives; this appears to be an habitual inclination. At distant times, we find the apostle in the same temper. That is not surely from the power of nature, that is so much against it, as the stream of nature now runs; that is, that a man should be willing to be plucked in pieces and severed from himself! And we see[1] whereto it is expressly ascribed: "He that hath wrought us to the self-same thing, is God."

VI. How black is their character, and how sad their state that are more addicted to the body, and this bodily life, than to the Lord, and that holy blessed life we are to partake in with him! Their character is black and horrid, as it is diverse from that which truly belongs to all the people of God that ever lived on earth; and so doth distinguish them from such, and place them among another sort of men that belong not to him; such as have their portion in this life, their good things here, and who are to expect nothing hereafter, but woe and wailing. And who would not be affrighted, that finds a mark upon him that severs him from the whole assembly of the just and the blessed? Their state is also therefore sad and dismal, inasmuch as what they place their highest felicity in, —their abode in the body,—they know will continue but a little while. Who could ever by their love of this bodily life, procure it to be perpetuated? or by their dread of mortality, make themselves immortal? Have not others, in all former ages, loved the body and this world as much? and what is become of them? Hath not death still swept the stage from generation to generation, and taken all away, willing or unwilling? To have all my good bound up in what I cannot keep, and to be in a continual dread of what I cannot avoid, —what can be more disconsolate? How grievous will it be

[1] 2 Cor. v. 5.

to be torn out of the body! not to resign the soul, but have it drawn forth as a rusty sword out of the sheath; a thing which our utmost unwillingness will make the more painful, but cannot defer! "No man hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, nor hath he power in death."[1] How uncomfortable, when the Lord's presence, the common joy of all good souls, is to me a dread! By the same degrees by which an abode in the body is over desired, is that presence dreaded and disaffected. And how deplorate is the case, when this body is the best shelter I have from that presence! Would I lurk in the body, and lie hid from the presence of the Lord? How easily and how soon will my fortress be beaten down and laid in the dust, and I be left naked and exposed; and then how fearful things to ensue!

But what now, doth this fearful case admit of no remedy? It can admit but of this only one,—which therefore I would now recommend and press,—the serious effectual endeavour of being to a just degree alienated from the body, and of having the undue love repressed and wrought down, of this bodily life. Mistake not; I go not about to persuade all promiscuously, out of hand and without more ado, to desire death or absence from the body. The desires of reasonable creatures should be reasonable; the product of valuable considerations and rational inducements. The present case of too many, the Lord knows, admits not they should be willing to die; who are they that they should desire the day of the Lord? a day of such gloominess and darkness, as it is likely, (should it now dawn,) to prove to them? No, but let all endeavour to get into that state and have their affairs in such a posture that they may be, upon good terms, reconciled to the grave; and that separation from the body may be the matter with them of a rational and truly Christian choice.

And since, as hath been said, there are two terms between which the inclination and motion of our souls in this case must lie, from the one to the other; namely, the body and the

[1] Eccles. viii. 8.

Lord, life in the body and with the Lord; let such things be considered on both hands, as may justly tend to diminish and lessen our inclination and love to the one and increase it towards the other: so as that all things being considered, and upon the whole, this may be the reasonable and self-justifying result,—to be well pleased "rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." And,

1. On the part of the body, and this bodily life, consider, —How costly it is to you! You lay out upon it—the most do—most of your time, thoughts, cares; the greater part, most (or even all) of their estates. All the callings you can think of in the world, and which all help to maintain at no little expense, are wholly for the body; what costly attendants must it have of cooks, bakers, brewers, mercers, physicians, lawyers, and what not! One only excepted that refers to the soul.

And again, when all is done, how little serviceable is it! When you would employ it,—sometimes it is sick, sometimes lame; sometimes lames the mind and intellect too, that it cannot do its office merely through the distemper of bodily organs; is at all times dull, sluggish, indisposed. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak."

Yea moreover, how disserviceable! hinders your doing good, prompts to the doing much evil. What a world of mischief is done among men merely by bodily lusts, and to serve fleshly appetite; these fill the world with confusion and miseries of all sorts. All catch from others what they can, for the service of the body; hence is competition of interests and designs; no man's portion is enough for him to serve the body, or the mind as it is depraved by bodily inclinations. And so the world is torn by its inhabitants, countries wasted and laid desolate, religion itself made subservient to fleshly interest; and thence is the occasion of many a bloody contest, of oppressions, persecutions, and violences; whereby many times it so falls out that such as are most vigorously engaged in a design of serving the body, destroy it,—their own as well as other men's: and, which is most dreadful, souls are nume-

rously lost and perish in the scuffle, yea, and very oft upon the account or pretence of religion, whose only design it is to save souls! And how many to save their bodies destroy even their own souls, not having learned that instruction of our Saviour's, "not to fear them that can only kill the body;" or, being unable to suffer some lesser bodily inconveniences, apostatize and abandon their religion, whereby that and their souls too become sacrifices to the safety and accommodation of an idolized lump of clay! And how certainly—if a seasonable repentance do not intervene—do they, who only thus tempt the souls of other men, destroy their own! Nor can it be doubted at this time of day, and after the experience of so many ages wherein Christianity hath been so visibly and grossly carnalized, but that it is a religion perverted to the support of the bodily and animal interest, that hath thus embroiled the Christian world. How plain is it, that they who desire "to make a fair show in the flesh," to strut in pomp, to glitter in secular grandeur and splendour, to live in unrebuked sensual ease and fulness, are the men that would constrain others to their carnal observances! men that "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies." Who can think it is pure love to souls, and zeal for the true ends of the holy peaceable religion of our blessed Jesus, that makes them so vexatious and troublesome to all whom their fleshly arm can reach and ruin, and whom their spirit and way cannot allure and win? Who that understands religion and the true design of it, and the blessed end wherein it will shortly terminate, would not be glad to be rescued out of this large diffusive unquiet empire of the body, that extends itself over all things, mingling its odious impurities even with what is most sacred? Who would not long to be from under this reign of the beast, if he might have a fair way of escape?

And where religion is not in the case, what multitudes of terrene creatures, earthly-minded men, are stupidly going down to perdition daily, and destroying their souls by mere neglect, while they are driving designs for the body!

Which yet in the mean time, is at the best but a prison to

the best of souls. O how could they love God, admire, and praise him, were they once out of this body!

But it is not enough to a subject wherein love is implanted and is a part of its nature, to have only the prospect of what is unlovely, or be told only what is not to be loved. There must be somewhat to invite and draw, as well as to repel and drive off. Therefore,

2. Consider also, on the other part, the Lord, and that life you are to transact and live with him. Little can now be said; you are not ignorant where much is *suggested,* and your own thoughts may, upon much conversing with the holy oracles, suggest yet more. And you have need to use your thoughts here the more largely, where your sense doth not instruct you, as on the other part it doth.

Consider the descriptions which you are copiously furnished with, both of Him, and of the state in which you are to be present with Him. Recount his glorious excellencies, his immense and all-sufficient fulness; his wisdom, power, holiness, and love in absolute perfection.

Consider his high, equal, comely, amiable regency over the blessed community above, that spiritual incorporeal people, the pleased joyful inhabitants of the celestial regions: and that he rules over them, and communicates himself universally to them, in a state of perfect light, purity, peace, love, and pleasure, that is also immutable, and never to know end. There is nothing capable of attracting an intellectual nature, which is not here!

But on both parts, suffer yourselves to be directed also.

i. Take heed of over-indulging the body, keep it in subjection; use it, and serve it not. Primitive nature, and the Creator's wise and holy pleasure, ordained it to serve. Lose not yourselves in it; take heed you be not *buried,* where you should but *dwell,* and that you make not your mansion your grave. Mansion do I say? Call it, as this apostle doth, (and another,[1]) your tabernacle only, a tent pitched for you but for a little while.

[1] 2 Pet. i. 13.

Every day look upon it,—and without fond pity,—as destined to rottenness and corruption; and as that, which when it ceases to be your clothing, must be worms' meat. Labour to make the thoughts easy and familiar to yourselves of leaving it; think it not an uncouth thing. How doth that part of the creation, that is inferior to you, abound with like instances; of fruits springing up out of this earth and growing to ripeness and maturity,—with husks, shells, or other integuments which then fall off; such as never ripen,—they and their enfoldings rot together! Esteem it your perfection, when your shell will fall off easily, and cleaves not so close as to put you to pain when it is to be severed from you.

Endeavour the holy and heavenly nature may grow more and more mature in you; so death will be the more also an unregretted thing to your thoughts. By all means labour to overcome the fear of it,—which that you *might*, our Lord also took a body. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."[1] Reckon not much of *that fear* which is only the mere regret of sensitive nature,—purely involuntary; and that can no more obey the empire of the mind or be regulated by it, than you can make straight a crooked leg by a mere act of your will, or make your body not feel pain; a fear from which the perfection of our nature in our blessed Lord himself, was not exempt. But it is one thing to extinguish even that fear, another to overcome it; the former is *impossible* to you, the latter *necessary*. It is overcome, when a superior principle governs you, and your resolutions, and course, as it did our Lord; he did not, *because* of it, spare himself and decline dying. You may feel perhaps somewhat of such a fear (a secret shrug) when you are to be let blood or have a wound searched. It governs not in such a less important case, when

[1] Heb. ii. 14, 15.

(being convinced it is requisite) you omit not the thing notwithstanding. Labour herein to be hardy and merciless to this flesh, upon the forethoughts of the time when God will allow you to step forth, and go out of the body; and say to it, with an obdured mind, 'For all thy craving and shrinking, thou shalt be thrown off.'

Labour it may not only not be the matter of your prevailing fear, but be the matter of your hope. Look towards the approaching season with pleasant cheerful expectation; aspire, as it belongs to you to do, who have "received the first-fruits of the Spirit,"—that blessed Spirit of adoption; and "groan for the adoption"—the season of your being more solemnly owned for sons—namely, "the redemption of the body;"[1] which, though it ultimately refer to the resurrection, may be allowed to have an incomplete meaning in reference to death too; for I see not but ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος may admit such a construction as ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν παραβάσεων;[2] that is, that redemption of the body may mean redemption from it, wherein it is burdensome, a grievance, and penalty,—here as well as there. The 'redemption of transgressions' doth truly mean liberation from the penalty of them; from which penal evil, of and by the body (so materially, at least, it is) we are not perfectly freed, as our blessedness is not perfect, till "mortality be swallowed up of life;" and all the adopted, "the many sons," be all "brought to glory" together.

How happy in the meantime is your case, when death becomes the matter of your rational well-grounded hope! You have many hopes wherein you are liable to disappointment; you will then have one sure hope, and that will be worth them all; none can prevent you of this hope. Many other things you justly hope for are hindered, by ill-minded men, of their accomplishment; but all the wit and power of your most spiteful enemies can never hinder you from dying. And how are you fenced against all the intervening troubles

[1] Rom. viii. 23. [2] Heb. ix. 15.

of life! *Nihil metuit qui optat mori;* you have nothing to fear, if you desire to die; nothing but what, at least, death will shortly put an end to. Make this your aim, to have life for the matter of your patience, and death of your desire.

ii. On the other part also, labour to be upon good terms with the Lord; secure it that he be yours. Your way to that is short and expedite; the same by which we become his:[1] "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." Solemnly and unfeignedly accept him and surrender yourselves; without this who can expect but to hear from him at last, "Depart from me, I know you not?" Know of yourselves, demand an account: are you sincerely willing to be his? and to take him for yours, without limitation or reserves? Matters are then agreed between him and you, and who can break or disannul the agreement? Who can come between him and you? I often think of the high transport wherewith those words are uttered: "The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus MY LORD."[2] This is Christian religion, not in a system, but as it is a vital principle and habit in the soul; inclining us, making us propense towards our blessed Lord, addicting and subduing us to him, uniting us with him; whereby we come to *know* by inward sensations, to feel the transfusions of his spiritual light and influence; and our souls are thereby caught, and bound up in the bundle of life. So we have "Christ formed within;" his holy truths, doctrines, precepts, promises, inwrought into the temper of our spirits: and, as it follows in that context,[3] to have him,—according to the states wherein he successively was,—by correspondent impressions represented in us; so as that we come to bear the image of him, crucified and dying, first; then reviving and rising; and afterwards, ascending and glorified: "To know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."[4]

[1] Ezek. xvi. 8. [2] Phil. iii. 8. [3] Phil. iii. [4] Ver. 10, 11.

Let us not be at rest till we find it thus in some measure with us. If we feel ourselves, after this manner, internally and initially conformed to him, this will be both a preparative and a pledge of our future perfect conformity, both internal and external. It will fit us to be ever with the Lord, and assure us we shall and can be nowhere else; that he and we shall not to eternity dwell asunder. We shall neither fear to be externally "conformed to him in his death," to quit and lay down the body as he did; nor despair of attaining with him the "resurrection from the dead," and of being present with him in glory: or that he shall recover for us, out of the dust, our vile abject bodies,—the τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν, 'the body of our humiliation,' wherein we were humbled, as he was in his;[1] and make it like his own glorious body, σύμμορφον, 'conform and agreeable;' by that power, "by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself."

In the meantime, as this present state admits, converse much with him every day; be not strangers to him, often recognise and renew your engagements to him. Revolve in your thoughts his interest in you, and yours in him; and the nearer relation which there is between him and you than that between you and this body. Recount with yourselves the permanency and lastingness of that relation; that whereas this body as now it is, (a terrestrial body,) will not be yours long, he is to "be your God for ever and ever;" that, though death must shortly separate you from this body, "neither life, nor death, principalities, nor powers, things present, nor things to come, shall ever separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." While this body is a body of death to you, he is your life, your hope, and your exceeding joy; your better, more laudable, and more excellent self, more intimate to you than you can be to yourself, as hath been anciently and often said; and for the obtaining whose presence, absence from the body is a very small matter.

[1] As it follows in that, Phil. iii. 21.

A great prince[1] (in an epistle to that philosopher) tells him: "I seem to myself not to be a man, as the saying is, while I am absent from *Jamblichus*, or while I am not conversant[2] with him." That we can better endure our Lord's absence, is surely a thing itself not to be endured; we should labour our acquaintance with him—such as is fit to be between so great a majesty and such mean creatures as we—should grow daily.

Yea, and endeavour to make the thoughts more familiar to ourselves, of spiritual beings in the general; for we are to serve and converse with him in a glorious community of such creatures; "an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, and the spirits of just men made perfect,"[3] in a region where an earthly body, remaining such, can have no place. Why do we make the thoughts of a spirit, out of a body, so strange to ourselves? We meet with hundreds of spirits *in* bodies, and moving bodies to and fro in the streets every day, and are not startled at it. Is a body so much nearer akin to us than a spirit, that we must have so mean a thing to come between, to mediate and reconcile us to it? Why are we afraid of what we are so nearly allied unto? Can we not endure to see or think of a man at liberty (suppose it were a friend or a brother) if we ourselves were in prison? The more easy you make the apprehension to yourselves of a disembodied spirit,—that is, free, I mean, of any terrestrial body,—the *better* we shall relish the thoughts of Him who is the head of that glorious society you are to be gathered unto; "for the Lord is that Spirit," the eminent, almighty, and all-governing Spirit; to be ever beheld too in his glorified body, as an eternal monument of his undertaking for us, and an assuring endearment of his relation to us, the *better* your minds will comply with the preconceived idea we are to entertain ourselves with, of the constitution, order, employment, and delights of that vast collection of heavenly associates we shall

[1] Julian, *Ep. ad Jamblic.* [2] οὐ συνῶ. [3] Heb. xii. 23.

dwell with for ever; and the *more* will you still incline to be absent from this body, that, among them, "you may be ever present with the Lord."

And if you thus cherish this pleasant inclination, think how grateful it will be, when it comes to be satisfied! How natural is that rest that ends in the centre to which a thing is carried by a natural motion! How pleasantly doth the departed soul of that good gentlewoman, whose decease we lament, solace itself in the presence of her glorious Lord! I shall say little concerning her; you will have her just memorial more at large ere long. I had indeed the opportunity, by an occasional abode some days under the same roof, several years before she came into that relation wherein she finished her course, to observe her strangely vivid and great wit, and very sober conversation. But the turn and bent of her spirit towards God and heaven more remarkably appeared a considerable time after; which when it did, she showed how much more she studied the interest of her soul than the body; and how much more she valued mental and spiritual excellencies than worldly advantages, in the choice of her consort, whom she accepted to be the companion and guide of her life.

She gave proof herein of the real greatness of her spirit, and how much she disdained to be guided by *their* vulgar measures, that have not wit and reason and religion enough to value the accomplishments of the mind and inner man; and to understand that knowledge, holiness, a heavenly heart, entire devotedness to the Redeemer, a willingness to spend and be spent in the service of God, are better and more valuable things than so many hundreds or thousands a year; and that no external circumstances can so far dignify a drunkard, an atheist, a profane wretch, as that, compared with one that bears such characters, he should deserve to be simply reckoned the better man; and that mere sober carnality and ungodliness suffice not to cast the balance:—or that have so little of these qualifications for the making a true judgment, as to think that calling dishonourable and a

diminution to a man, that refers immediately to the soul and the unseen world, and that relates and sets him nearest to God.

She knew how to make her estimate of the honour of a family and a pedigree, as things valuable in their *kind;* without allowing herself so much vanity as to reckon they were things of the most *excellent* kind, and to which nothing personal could be equal: and well understood, of the personal endowments of the body and the mind, *which* were to have the preference. Her life might teach all, those especially of her own sex, that a life's time in the body is for some other purposes than to indulge, and trim, and adorn the body; which is most minded by them who, as that shows, have in the meantime most neglected, and, God knows, most depraved and deformed souls! I hope her example, more fully and publicly represented, will more generally teach; in the meantime, this instance of our common mortality should teach us all. We see this state of life in the body is not that we were finally made for; yet how few seriously look beyond it! And it is amazing to think how little the deaths of others signify to the making us mind our own. We behave ourselves as if death were a thing only to be undergone by some few persons, here and there, and that the most should escape; and as if we took it for granted we should be of the exempted number. How soon are impressions from such occasions, talked, and trifled, and laughed, and jested away! Shall we now learn more to study and understand our own natures? to contemplate ourselves, and our duty thereupon? that we are a mortal, immortal sort of creatures? that we are sojourners only in a body, which we must shortly leave to dust and worms? that we are creatures united with bodies, but separable from them? Let each of us think, 'I am one that can live in a body, and can live out of a body. While I live in one, that body is not mine; I dwell not in mine own: that the body must be for the Lord, as he will then be for the body; that we shall dwell comfortless and miserable in the body, if we dwell in it solitary and alone, and have

not with us a better inhabitant: that our bodies are to be mansions for a Deity, houses for religion, temples of the Holy Ghost.' O the venerable thoughts we should have of these bodies upon this account! How careful should we be not to debase them, not to alienate them. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."[1] Will a man rob God? break and violate his house? how horrid a burglary! Shall we agree to resign these bodies, and this bodily life? Our meeting will have been to good purpose, might this be the united sense of this dissolving assembly: 'Lord, here we surrender and disclaim, otherwise than for and under thee, all right and title to these bodies and lives of ours. "We present our bodies holy, acceptable, living sacrifices, as our reasonable service."' Let us do so, and remember we are hereafter "not to live to ourselves, nor to die," at length, "to ourselves, but living and dying to be the Lord's."

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 17.

A FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. JUDITH HAMMOND.

TO THE

REVEREND MR. HAMMOND.

My offering this discourse to the eye of the world together with your own, shows how great power our ancient friendship hath given you over me; whereof I have the less unpleasant sense, believing you will understand it so; who, in great part, know how difficul my circumstances made it to me, to comply with your desire herein. Your opinion of the fitness of publishing so uncomposed a thing, discovers how far *you* were subject also to the same power; whose judgment I am little apt to distrust, where it meets not with this bias.

It will be a joy to me, if it help to mitigate your sorrow; which is in great part justified by the greatness of your loss, in being separated, after so long conversation, from so excellent a consort, that lived in this world so much above it.

I reckon it an evidence of the real greatness of her spirit, that she thought *that* so little a thing wherein others place greatness; and that in almost forty years' acquaintance with you both, I should never hear of her nearness to a noble family, till, occasionally, since her death. It seems the blood that filled her veins did not swell her mind; and her heavenly birth and relation to the house and family of God made her forget her earthly kindred and parents' house.

Sir, though whom God hath joined together, no man might put asunder; yet when he that hath made the union, makes the separation, there is no saying to him: 'What dost thou?' We

must awhile tug with the difficulties of our state and work; wherein the hope of helping some (as God shall graciously help us) to gain this victory over death, and of being at length, through his grace, victors ourselves, will be a constant relief and support to you, and

Your very respectful brother,

And fellow-servant in the labours of the gospel,

J. H.

A FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE

DEATH OF MRS. JUDITH HAMMOND.

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1 COR. xv. 54. (the latter part.)

"DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY."

THE foregoing words signify this saying to have been before written elsewhere. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up," etc. And we find it before written,[1] in express words, and in such as are equivalent.[2] What their dependence or meaning is, in either of those places, cannot be discussed within our present narrow limits: only it is sufficiently manifest that sundry passages in the Holy Scripture are said to be brought to pass, over and over, once and again; as that of Rachel's "weeping for her children," and of God's "bringing his Son out of Egypt;" with divers others.

This great saying may have had some partial and gradual accomplishment within the current of time, when, in reference to a people more specially related to God and in some more notable delinquency and defection from him, he may have given a just but limited commission to death, to

[1] Isaiah xxv. 8. [2] Hos. xiii. 14.

make great ravage and destructions among them; so that it hath even rode in triumph, made a huge carnage, strewed their country with carcasses, turned their rich land,—more enriched with human blood,—into an Aceldama, and, thereupon, but into a place of sepulture and of graves; and yet, when it hath gone as far as his designed limits and executed all his pleasure, he may have stopped it in its career, and said: "Hitherto thou shalt come and no further;" now, cease and give over:[1] and so may have ransomed the residue from the power of the grave, and been the destruction of their destroyers,—plaguing them who were their plagues. This, in the next intention hereof, may respect the people of the Jews; who, being returned from their now foreseen captivity, might in the prophetic style be spoken of as a people risen from the dead and newly sprung up out of the grave; but might have a further reference to the yet future state of the Christian church, as *the language of* Isaiah seems to carry it;[2] when so great a death as hath long been upon it as well as the rest of the world, it may be hoped shall be swallowed up in a very glorious victory!

But this saying is introduced here, as having its final and ultimate completion in conjunction with what is mentioned besides in this context; namely, when in the close and shutting up of time, the "trumpet shall sound,"—as we are told elsewhere it shall at the coming of our Lord,—and the dead, those that died in him, first[3] be raised, the living changed, so as to bear his, the heavenly Adam's, image: "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality; *then* shall be brought to pass this saying," (whatever preludes thereto, "as was written," there may have been before,) "Death is swallowed up in victory."

And according to this its fullest sense is this saying to be the subject of our present consideration. The expression is highly rhetorical, but there is a most rational solid sense intended under it; for which no words can be too big or of too great a sound.

[1] As Hos. xiii. 14. [2] Ch. xxv. 6—8. [3] 1 Thess. iv. 16.

Our business must be to explain and apply this saying. And,

First. For explication of its rational import, we shall show—I. The import. II. The reasonableness of it.

I. It imports, in general, God's determination to put a perpetual end to death; to make it cease *in perpetuum*, as a noted expositor[1] expresses it,—showing that the parallel Hebrew phrase is usually rendered 'for ever.'[2]

But that we may give a more distinct account of its meaning, several things are to be noted.

1. That death, as it is here spoken of, supposes a certain limited subject. Its being mentioned in this chapter and elsewhere, as if it were itself a *suppositum*, and an intelligent designing one, is an elegant and a usual figure. The Holy Scriptures and common speech abound with this sort of *prosopopœia;* and it hath its special usefulness, when, as in the present case, what we are more to remark, and consider with greater intention of mind, is so represented; that is, when to things of minute or of no entity, but of great concernment, (such mere privations as death or sin,) a sort of personality is ascribed, attended with terrible aspects and appearances, it tends more effectually to rouse our minds and engage our attention; whether we are to consider and magnify our danger by them, or our deliverance, and to behold them as attempting upon us, or as overcome. But speaking strictly, we must take things as in themselves they are. Death therefore must be considered in reference to some subject or other. Abstractly considered, it is but a notion. As it actually hath taken place, it must be the death of this or that person. And as it is finally to be overcome and have an end, it must have a limited subject and not be understood of all, absolutely and universally; for then there would be no such thing as eternal death,—which hath no end. And now the subject, here supposed, is to be limited; the series of discourse, through the chapter, shows

[1] *Grot. in loc.* לנצח; εἰς νῖκος.

[2] 2 Sam. ii. 26; Jer. iii. 5; and in divers other places.

they are such as are Christ's,[1] and to whom he is peculiarly the first-fruits;[2] such as shall bear his heavenly image,[3] and, as elsewhere, "whose vile bodies shall be made like his glorious" one;[4] such as shall have spiritual, incorruptible, immortal bodies like his, and with him inherit the kingdom of God, and through him obtain this victory.[5]

2. This limitation of 'death to be overcome,' to such a subject only, connotes the extent of it to the whole of that subject, as that is composed of an inner and an outer man.[6] It were frigid and comfortless to suppose, if it were supposable, that this glorious conquest of death should extend no further than the giving us a fair specious outside; and that our mind and spirit should not partake, or be nothing the better for it. It is plain the apostle's scope through this chapter is more to assert the future subsistence of the soul than the recomposure of the body,—as his arguments show; though what was necessary to be said concerning the future state of *that* also, is not neglected. But what he is now saying, in this part of the chapter, concerns not what is common to men, but what is peculiar to good and holy men. And therefore, as it respects their nobler part, must intend more than its mere subsistence in another state,—which is common to good and bad,—and signify the perfection of the holy divine life, which shall be at last entirely victorious, and swallow up death in its utmost extent, and specially as it was opposite to that life: death I mean, as it was so heavily incumbent upon the minds and spirits of good men themselves, and was their most intolerable burden; extorting from them such groans as that, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"[7] Nor indeed is this death sensible, or grievous, or ever felt, but where the opposite life hath some place. Total death knows no grievances, makes no complaints. They that lie buried in the earth are in their own element, where no

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 23. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Ver. 49. [4] Phil. iii. 21.
[5] 1 Cor. xv. 50—57. [6] 2 Cor. iv. 16. [7] Rom. vii. 24.

such thing weighs upon them; a terrene carnal mind is no burden to such souls as are quite dead in trespasses and sins. I hope I need not tell you that though the souls of men are universally immortal in the natural sense, they are not so in the moral. Morality comprehends the means and end, virtue and felicity; or in terms more agreeable to our Christian ethics, or that are oftener heard by them that live under the gospel, holiness and blessedness. These are signified by spiritual life, or life in the spiritually moral sense: and so are sin and misery by the opposite, death. And no man hath reason to think it strange that life and death are estimated by such measures; or that a temper of spirit, habitually and fixedly good or evil, should be signified by being alive or dead, if we consider how perfect an equivalency there is between them in the moral sense, and being naturally alive or dead. For wherein do we usually state the notion of natural life, but in a self-moving power? Now let any ordinary understanding be appealed to in the case, and who would not say it were as good not to be able to move at all, as to move in so perpetual disorder as never to attain any end such motion should serve for. The ends of a reasonable creature's motions must be duty to its Maker and felicity to itself. If all its motions be such as import constant hostility towards God, infelicity and torment to itself; this is to be dead, not simply and naturally it is true, but respectively; and not in some bye and less considerable respect, but in respect of the principal and most important purposes of life. So that, in full equivalency, such a one is as dead to all valuable intents and purposes whatsoever. Therefore such are only said to be alive in a true and the most proper sense, that are "alive unto God through Jesus Christ:"[1] or that do "yield themselves to God as those that are alive from the dead,"[2]—it being the proper business of their life to serve God, and enjoy him. Others that only live in sinful "pleasure, are dead while they live."[3] Nor hath such a notion of life

[1] Rom. vi. 11. [2] Ver. 13. [3] 1 Tim. v. 6.

and death been altogether strange, even among heathens, when we find it said by one of no mean note: 'That a wicked man is dead, as a soul may be said to die;[1] and to it, it is a death, when it is too deeply plunged,[2] immersed into the body so as to be sunk down into matter, and replete with it;' besides much more that might be produced from others of like import: and how agreeable is this passage to that,[3] "To be carnally minded is death."

Upon the whole, I cannot indeed conceive that since death is often taken, and that most reasonably, in so great a latitude as to admit of comprehending this sense; and since, in these latter verses, the apostle is speaking of a final deliverance from it as the special privilege of such as are in union with Christ,—not of what is common to all men,—but that victory over death in this respect, as it imports aversion from God or indisposition towards him, must be within his meaning; and that he was far from confining it to bodily death only, or from intending, in reference to the soul, the mere natural immortality of that alone: but that death, in its utmost latitude, was now, in reference to this sort of men whom his present discourse intends, to be entirely swallowed up in victory, or in a perfect plenitude of victorious life.[4]

So much, which was more requisite to be insisted on, being clear, we shall less need to enlarge upon what follows: as that,

3. This victory supposes a war; or that life and death were before in a continual struggle. So we find the case is. Even this lower world is full of vitality; yet death hath spread itself through it, and cast over it a dark and dismal shadow everywhere, according as sin, which introduced it, is diffused and spread. Death is therefore mentioned as an enemy;[5] and so we understand it: natural death as an enemy to nature; spiritual to grace. In the body, numerous maladies, and round about it, multitudes of adverse ren-

[1] Ὡς ἂν ψυχὴ θάνοι. [2] Βεβαπτισμένη, Plotin. Enn. 1.
[3] Rom. viii. 6. [4] As 2 Cor. v. 4. [5] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

counters are striving to infer death. In and about the mind and spirit, worse diseases and temptations have the like tendency; temptations, I say,—the mention whereof was not to be omitted, as pointing at the tempter, the wicked one, who first brought sin and death into this world of ours; and who is, though the concealed, the first and most proper seat of the enmity, which gives death the *denomination* of an enemy; which is so called indefinitely, 'the last enemy,' that we might not understand it to be our enemy only, but more an enemy against God than us; from whom the spiteful apostate aimed and gloried, to pluck away, and bury in death and ruin, the whole race of human creatures. In the meantime nature in all, and grace in the regenerate, are counter-striving. In the former, the self-preserving principle is more sensibly vigorous, but less successful; but "they who are born of God," are better assisted by their Divine Keeper; in subordination to whom they are enabled effectually to "keep themselves, that the wicked one," mortally, "touches them not,"[1] but,—as must be supposed,—not without continual watching and striving, as in war is usual.

4. Where such a war and striving end not in victory on the one side, they end in victory on the other. This is consequent upon what hath been said of the limited subject here spoken of. Death is not *universally* overcome; with some it is left to be conceived therefore as a conqueror. We see how it is with the two hemispheres of our globe; when in the one, the light is chasing the darkness of the foregoing night, and we behold the morning gradually spreading itself upon the mountains, and it shines brighter and brighter unto perfect day; so in the other a feebler light doth more and more retire and yield, till at length it be quite swallowed up in the victorious darkness of a black and horrid midnight. It is much after the same rate *here*,—with this difference, that vicissitudes and alternations cease; and whether darkness and the shadow of death or the light of life be finally

[1] 1 John v. 18.

victorious, they are so, as hath been said, for ever. With the one sort, that is, with the righteous, a vital light arises in the midst of darkness; a type of their spiritual, and a prelude to their eternal state. They have a quickening light within, under all clouds of present ignominy and trouble, and an eternal day awaits them. Now "death worketh in them," and surrounds them on every side for awhile, and gains a temporary victory over their bodily life; which while it is doing, and their "outward man is perishing, their inward man is renewed day by day." But at length even that vanquished life revives, and that more noble life which "is hid with Christ in God,"[1] and of which he says, "that whosoever lives, and believes in him, shall never die,"[2] becomes perfect; for it is pure life, as that is said to be pure, which is *plenum sui*, and *minimum habet alieni*, 'full of itself, without mixture of anything alien from it;' having quite swallowed up whatsoever was opposite or disagreeable. So doth life, in the several kinds and degrees of it, flourish with them, in a permanent, perpetual, and most consistent state: and as regal power is often founded in just conquest, they do even "reign in life, by Jesus Christ."[3]

But for the other sort, that sorry, pitiful, dying life they have, wherein they are even "dead while they live," will be swallowed up in a victorious, eternal, death; in which there remains to them a perpetual night, and "the blackness of darkness for ever."—We are next to consider,

II. The reasonableness of the Divine determination which this saying imports. And that is to be collected by reminding who it is that hath so determined; he that can effect all his determinations and do all his pleasure. The reason of his intendments and performances must be fetched from himself, and the perfection of his own nature; unto which nothing can be more agreeable.

When death, let in by sin, hath been "reigning," doing the part of a king[4] over so great a part of God's creation, it

[1] Col. iii. 3. [2] John xi. 26. [3] Rom. v. 17—21. [4] As Rom. v. 17.

can be little suitable to him, "who doth all things after the counsel of his own will,"[1] to let it reign for ever. Sometime it must be swallowed up in victory. Otherwise, 1. His own glory would suffer a perpetual eclipse. 2. The felicity of his redeemed should never be complete.

Neither of which, as we are taught to apprehend the state of things, can consist with the absolute perfection of his being.

1. Can we think it agreeable to him, to suffer such a perpetual solecism or incongruity within his dominion, that when death, by means of a most criminal apostasy, had made so great an inroad into the nobler part of his creation; that is, had broken in amongst creatures capable of immortality, who indeed otherwise had not been capable of sin, and thereby darkened the glory which shone more brightly in such an order of creatures,—it should be so always? that is, that such a sort of creatures should be perpetually continued, to be born, and sin, and die? Sometime we must think this course of things should have an end, and not by yielding an everlasting conquest to an enemy. We can well conceive it most worthy of God, when he had made such creatures,—unto whom liberty was as agreeable as holiness and felicity,—to leave them to themselves awhile, as probationers and candidates for that state of immortal life whereof they were not incapable. It well became a self-sufficient Being and an absolute Sovereign, to let them understand dependence and subjection, and that *their* state was precarious, not his; to let them feel the cost of ungovernableness and self-will, and the disagreeableness thereof to their condition who were not self-subsistent, and had not their good in their own hands. If, being put upon this trial, they would transgress, and open a way for death to come in upon them, the real loss could only be their own, and none of his. He had no reason therefore to prevent it by so unseasonable an interposition, as should prevent the orderly connexion between duty and felicity; that is, the precedency

[1] Eph. i. 11.

of the former to the other. All this was a most unexceptionable procedure. But then, when being left to themselves, they as men, or as "Adam, had transgressed,"[1] and done like themselves, that is, like frail mutable creatures, in their lapse into sin and death; how opportune was it for him, now to do more illustriously like himself; that is, by so surprising, unthought of methods as the gospel reveals, to recover to himself this glory out of the cloud, and make it shine more brightly than ever, in this final victory over death, and him that had the power of it! So that it shall at last retain no dominion over any but such as by their own choice, during a new state of trial, remained in an inviolable union with that prince of darkness, and death. How glorious will the triumphs of this victory be, over the grand apostate! And how unsupposable is it, that he should have occasion left him to glory in an eternal conquest! And,

2. It is not a light thing to him whose nature is love, that without this final victory the felicity of the redeemed should never be fully accomplished. Antecedently to the gospel revelation, it would seem more agreeable to the nature of God, that some should be rescued from the power of death than that all should lie under it for ever. But we, to whom that revelation is vouchsafed, cannot now but think it the most unlikely thing in the world, that the design of Almighty love should finally be defeated; and that such as are in vital union with the Redeemer should either be overcome at last by death or remain in an eternal struggle with it. Whence nothing can be conceived in this case, but that, as to them, death must be swallowed up in this glorious everlasting victory.

Whereupon, how admirable a display will there herein be of sundry the most known attributes and excellencies of the Divine nature, as his wisdom, power, goodness, holiness, justice, and truth, in the whole conduct and in this final issue of things,—as might be distinctly shown of each, if we were not within limits. He at first dealt with them very

[1] Hos. vi. 7.

suitably to *their* natures, at length he deals with them according to *his own;* that it may be the theme of eternal contemplation to themselves and the whole intelligent world, how far "his ways are above their ways, and his thoughts above their thoughts;"[1] and that as, at first, he thought it not fit to hinder them from doing as too little became such creatures, nothing should at last hinder him from doing as became a God.

But come we now to the *use*. And,

I. Do we find this saying in the sacred word of God, that death is to be swallowed up in victory? Then we are not to doubt but so it shall be. A plenary assent is to be given to it; but what sort of assent? Not that which arises from the sight of our eye. If *that* were to be our only informer, we see no such thing; but quite the contrary. That represents death to us as the only conqueror; it visibly swallows up all in victory, wheresoever it makes a seizure. Nothing stands before it. We behold it turning everywhere living men and women, like ourselves, into breathless lumps of earth! It irresistibly introduces itself, and life is fled and gone! Such as conversed with us, walked to and fro amongst us, reasoned, discoursed with us, managed business, pursued designs, delighted themselves with us, and gave us delight, become death's captives before our eyes, are bound in its bands, and we cannot redeem them, nor save ourselves. Where then is this swallowing up of death in victory, which is itself so constantly victorious?

Our *reason* may tell us it shall not be always and universally so; but it flutters and hallucinates. It is the Divine word that must at last put the matter out of doubt, and our *faith* therein, which is the substance of what we hope for, and the evidence of what we do not see. If faith is to assure our hearts in this matter, it must be as it relies upon his word, who can do this, and hath said he will. If we believe his power, that renders it possible to us; if his

[1] Isaiah lv. 9.

word, that makes it certain. Hath he said it, who then shall gainsay it? It is one of the "true and faithful sayings of God."

II. If this be a credible saying, it is certainly a very comfortable one.

If we can but make that first step and perceive this not to be a hard or incredible saying, it is very obvious to make a second, and acknowledge it to be a very consolatory saying: and that both in reference to the past death of our friends and relatives, even such as were nearest and most dear to us; and in reference to our own most certainly future and expected death.

In the one case and the other, we are to look upon it as a comfortable saying, that this mighty raging enemy shall have all his power lost and swallowed up in so glorious a victory one day.

1. It is surely a very comfortable saying in the former of these cases,—the case of our losing friends and relations very dear unto us. And there only needs this to make it most deliciously pleasant,—that is, to have a comfortable persuasion concerning such, that they are part of Christ's seed; they are some of them, in reference to whom Christ is, in the most peculiar sense, the first-fruits, so as that they have a pre-assurance of victory in his conquest, and victory over death and the grave. And we have great reason to be so persuaded concerning that worthy gentlewoman, whose late decease is the more special occasion of this solemn assembly at this time. She was one who—as such as had most opportunity to observe and best ability to judge, did reckon—had given abundant evidence of the work of God's saving grace upon her own spirit, and who thereupon did long walk with God in a very continued course; so indeed, as that though her comforts were observed not to be rapturous, yet they were steady and even; so as that she was rarely troubled with doubts, to give obstruction or hinderance to her in her Christian course. If any such doubt did arise, it soon vanished, and she quickly, through the mercy of God,

received satisfaction, and so went cheerfully on in her way. She was abundant in reading, especially of the holy book; *that* was her business and delight. She very little cared to concern herself in reading writings that were merely notional, or polemical and disputative; but the most practical ones she was most of all taken with; such as treated of the other state, and of the duties of Christians in the meantime in reference thereto; future felicity, and present spiritual-mindedness,—that has so certain connexion therewith and so direct a tendency thereto,—were with her the delightful subjects which she chose to read of and meditate upon.

Her temper was observed to be even, betwixt a freeness and reservedness. She was not melancholy, though much inclined to solitariness; and would frequently lament that so much of her precious time was passed away either in necessary business or civil conversation, that was not to be avoided.

It was observed that her disposition was most highly charitable; very apt to give, even to her uttermost, as occasions did occur.

In reference to her children, her care was most tender. Much of her time was spent in instructing them, while under her instruction and within her reach; teaching them their catechism, with the proofs at large, and how to apply the proofs to the answer, so as to bring them to a distinct understanding thereof. And in this way and course she passed through the world.

Her last sickness did very little alter the temper of her spirit; it was calm and sedate all along. Only so much does deserve a remark, that she was prepossessed with an apprehension that she should die suddenly; so much of God's secret he was pleased to impart to her, as he sometimes does to more inward friends. That discovery he vouchsafed to her, as to a favourite, to let her have some kind of presignification that her passage out of this world should be very quick, whensoever it came: and so it was, that sitting in her chair, amidst familiar discourse, in a dimidiated

sentence, she made a full stop, and life was ended, before *that* could have an end.

Now certainly the decease of such a one ought not to be lamented with that bitter sorrow, as if there were no such thing as this,—that death were certainly to be swallowed up in victory; in an entire and complete victory with reference to such a one. It seems indeed in such cases, (as was said to you before,) unto the judgment of our sense, that death only overcomes; we see not beyond that; it turns a living creature into a dead clod, and so it is laid among such; it is buried in the grave, our sight goes no further. But when we are persuaded, by the word of the Lord, that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption, and death be swallowed up in such a victory as you have heard; certainly this takes away the cause of all bitter and reliefless sorrow.

I am not unapprehensive that reverend brother, whom this stroke touches more nearly, is much fitter to administer this consolation, than receive it from such a one as I.

But as we may any of us put in for our share,—as our case may require and can admit,—in what is so generally spoken with reference to Christians dying in the Lord, and their surviving fellow-Christians that as yet live in him:[1] so, we are directed to comfort one another therewith. Be patient, I pray you, while I present to you this most suitable portion of Scripture: "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even them so also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you, by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together

[1] 1 Thess. iv., from verse 13 onward to the end.

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." We shall be in a great promptitude and disposition of spirit to do so, if these words be looked upon as Divine sayings, as the words of the living and immortal God. My friends, do you not find there is spirit in these words? Is there not strong consolation in them? How can we but think so, unless our whole religion be with us but a fable? This concerns us all upon the common Christian account, who are but a residue, a remnant, escaped and exempted awhile from being part of the spoils and triumphs of death; which hath slaughtered and thrown into the dust, probably a much greater number of our friends and relatives, than we ourselves do make, who are left behind. And it is likely we have been most of us divers times mourners, upon such occasions. This shows upon what account and in what case, we may intermingle very reviving consolations with our sorrows, and that we ought freely, as the occasion recurs, to apply it to ourselves and one another.

But I withal think there may be somewhat of more special import, tending to repress intemperate sorrow on such an occasion.[1] I think there may be somewhat, I say, collected, besides what was more peculiar and appropriate by way of signal to the prophet himself, that may reach the last mentioned case. It was a thing enjoined upon him: that "he should not mourn nor weep, nor should his tears run down, when God should take away from him the desire of his eyes with a stroke." I reckon that, as we have seen Christians should not mourn like other men, so "the Lord's prophets" are not to mourn altogether "like others of his people;" but somewhat more of restraint they are to put upon themselves, that they may discover a higher excellency, or somewhat a greater measure, of that "spirit of faith" ruling in them, that gives a great allay to present things, whether good or evil, as

[1] In that of Ezek. xxiv. 16.

it begets clearer and more vivid apprehensions of things yet future and out of sight: and that as all believers should endeavour, in things of common concernment to all, to be exemplary to one another and to other men; so they who are so much nearer to God, in office and relation, should be "examples to believers in conversation, spirit, faith."[1]

2. This should be very comfortable too unto them that are in union with Christ, in reference to their own future death, which they are continually to expect. Death is often saying to us, repeatedly and very sensibly, to our very bone and our flesh, 'You shall be my prey shortly; at least, sooner or later.' It is ready to make its seizure upon us; when, we do not know; but we are sure some time it will.

But, my friends, it does not become Christians to look upon this thing, called 'death,' as so formidable a thing as it is commonly reckoned; it is ignominious to our profession; not to be endured amongst them that have "life and immortality brought to light" and set in view before their eyes in the gospel; such as profess to be united with Christ, who hath "life in himself" and imparts it to all that are so united,—such a life, hid with Christ in God,—and hope that "when he who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory." It becomes not such to die continually by the fear of dying, or that the very thoughts of death should be deadly to them.

This is remote from what was much observed to be the temper and character of primitive Christians. A heathen prince,[2] who thoroughly understood them not, censures them too hardly as being in the other extreme—though he at length became kinder to them—as if they rashly threw themselves upon death: 'Whereas,' he says, 'the soul should rationally and becomingly be in readiness to be loosed from the body.'[3] But how come we to lose our character and our glory? How degenerated a thing is the Christianity of our

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 12. [2] Marc. Antonin. *de Vit. suâ*, lib. 11.
[3] Λελογισμένως, καὶ σεμνῶς.

age! To die without regret, is counted an attainment; it should be with gladness,[1] and upon the considerations there mentioned,—as being now upon the confines of that world of perfect purity, bliss, and joy; and having so great an assurance that the intermediate death we are to go through, is no sooner suffered than overcome!

We should deal closely with ourselves in this. Do we think this saying a fable or a trifle? Have these words no meaning? We should labour to come to a point, and say, if we have no reason to disbelieve them, we will believe them *absolutely;* and live as having gained our point and overcome already; that is, who are as sure of victory as of death. Some overcome by dying, as others are overcome by it. There are, who "are not hurt by the second death." If death strike once, it thereby puts it out of its own power ever to strike a second time or hurt them more. Let us once bring our case to that state as to live in continual defiance of death, let it strike when it will. Dependence only on the grace and Spirit of Christ must give us this confidence; not an opinion that we are ourselves strong enough to act separately, but that knowing our relation to him, "we are, through him that loved us, more than conquerors;" or as that ὑπερνικῶμεν[2] may be understood to signify, we are a glorious triumphant sort of conquerors. We not only conquer, but triumph too, through him that loved us; being persuaded that neither death nor life shall separate us from his love . . . So a noted expositor understands that word, observing how great a delight this apostle takes,—when he would heighten a matter,—in the use of that particle ὑπέρ.

It is elsewhere said,[3] "Ye are dead, but your life," etc. We are *dead,* that is, in ourselves; we are a sort of dead or dying creatures; death hath almost got the possession of us already, has partly seized and partly sentenced us to die, and irreversibly. This the apostle intimates, where he adds what you have heard: "Ye have a life hid with Christ in God;"

[1] Ps. xvi. 9—11. [2] Rom. viii. 37. [3] Col. iii. 3.

that life is safe, and out of the reach of death; no death can touch that life. "They that are born of God" have in reference to this life, though the other must be given up, a self-preserving principle and power in them.[1] "They keep themselves, that the evil one touches them not;" that is, not mortally, or with any deadly touch. In having a new, holy, divine life, they have an assuring pledge also of the permanency, perpetuity, and everlastingness of it. If a man have once "drunk of that water" which Christ gives, it shall be in him a perpetual fountain, "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."[2]

Are we Christians, and with the springings of this life do we not feel a lively joy springing and exulting in our hearts? Add vital Christianity to the rational nature, and loathness to die is a repugnancy and a reproach to both. Christianity so plainly stating our case, reason should judge upon it and suitable affections arise in us thereupon; as they *would*, if our Christianity were vital and the product of the Divine Spirit. *Then*, how should we bless God that we are mortal, and that it is not in the power of all this world to keep us from dying out of it, when we know in how glorious a victory that death will be swallowed up!

But it may be said by some: 'We should very little fear death, if we did know our interest in Christ; if we were not in great uncertainty, and had not our hearts hanging in doubt within us about this thing.' And therefore,

III. This saying should be monitory to us; as it is a credible, as it is a comfortable, so it is a monitory saying also—"Death shall be swallowed up in victory." This, said in reference to some, which cannot be meant as to all,—so great a thing spoken with restriction,—ought to make them of whom it is *not* meant, look about them! With what solicitude should we concern ourselves, to be at a certainty! Am I one of them, in reference to whom death shall be swallowed up in such a victory?

[1] 1 John v. 18. [2] John iv. 14.

It should awaken us to consider, Have we made our interest sure in our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Prince and Lord of life? "He that hath the Son hath life." It is eternal life that is spoken of in that context.[1] "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son;" that is, this *eternal* life. "He that hath the Son," hath this life; "he that hath not the Son," hath not this life. Spiritual life and eternal life are all one, all of a piece, the same in nature and kind; the one will grow up into the other.

That life only is here meant, that will be eternal life. To the same sense is that: "He that believeth in me, shall never die."[2] These are plain words. He hath a life in him that is immortal, sacred, and not liable to be touched. It was before said: "They that believe in him, if dead, shall live."[3] But not only *that*, but it is further added: 'They that believe in him shall never die.'[4] If dead, they shall live; if they live, they shall never die; what means this? That they have a life, besides this bodily one, which is continued through death. Of this line or thread, death makes no intercision. But we can never justify it to God, or our own understandings, to rest in a dubious uncertainty about a matter of so vast consequence as this. Unconcernedness here is the most unaccountable thing in the whole world; that is, whether we have only that life in us which will end in the darkness and rottenness of a grave and a horrid hell, or that which runs into eternal life? Things will come to this issue very shortly with us, that either death must, as to us, be swallowed up in victory, or we be swallowed up of victorious death; nor have we any ways to ascertain our own state, but (as was said) by uniting with the Prince of life; that is, by receiving him in all the capacities wherein we are to be concerned with him, and by resigning ourselves entirely to him. For if we must have him, that we may have life; how can we, otherwise,

[1] 1 John v. 11, 12.
[2] John xi. 26.
[3] Ver. 25.
[4] *Vid.* Ham. in loc.

have him but by receiving him. The gospel, under which we live, can only be a "savour of life" to us as it disposes us hereunto. Recollect yourselves then; how do your Lord's days, and other seasons of attending this gospel, pass over with you? Have you long expected life, and (which is less likely) do you meet with continual and total disappointments? And doth it cause with you no qualmish thoughts? But it is infinitely a sadder case, if you never feel yourselves begin to live, and yet are never disappointed, because you never attend upon the gospel dispensation with any such design or hope. Is the matter thus, that if you speak the truth of your case, you must say: 'I have a soul dead to all the actions, motions, sensations, enjoyments, of a divine and spiritual life.' And shall it be always thus, by our own consent, with any of us? We have however the rational, intellectual life, and can *think;* do we *think* it is fit for us to rest satisfied and secure in such a state? What, satisfied in the midst of death? such a death? while we are capable of apprehending at once the horror, the danger, and the remediableness of our case? What will this come to? It can only be holy, divine life that must be victorious over death, as the warring, opposite principle; if there be nothing to oppose it, what shall conquer? Death is in that case total; and upon such terms, till life begin to spring in thy soul, thou must reckon it likely to be eternal. Yet let none so mistake as to imagine this life an enthusiastical thing, that must discover itself in rapturous ecstatical motions, or go for nothing. It perfects our faculties, therefore destroys them not; and chiefly consists in a rational judgment, choice, and love of what is most worthy of us; what is fittest to be done by us, and what is with fullest satisfaction to be enjoyed; with a stedfast, most resolved adherence thereunto.

IV. This saying ought to be instructive to us in reference especially to this one thing,—that is, that we abstain from rash censures of Providence; that God lets death be regnant in so great a part of his creation, so long a time. It shall "be swallowed up in victory;" let that solve with us

the phenomenon. It seems indeed an untoward one, and might at first be an amazing spectacle even to the blessed angels themselves, to behold so great a revolt in heaven, and afterwards to take notice of an intelligent world of creatures beneath them, successively, through one first delinquent, drawn in as accomplices into a like defection; and death hereby spreading its horrid shadow and extending its power over so great and so noble a part of the universe; committing such wastes, making such desolations, from age to age, in so great a part of the creation of God! But there are many alleviating considerations that should compose our spirits to a rational quietude, and be satisfying and pacifying to our minds with reference to this thing. Let me but name some few to you, which I shall leave with you for this purpose.

1. Do but consider how minute a part of the creation of God, this globe, this point, this punctilio rather, of our earth is, where death has reigned and so long had place.

2. Consider how much of life there is in and about this little world of ours! When, upon one single mole-hill, you see the brisk motions and efforts of so many hundred lives, you have reason to apprehend there is a great deal of vitality about this little spot of earth.

3. Consider and collect how probable it is, that, as we go higher and higher, the nobler and finer parts of God's creation must be much more replenished with a nobler and more excellent sort of life. It is very unreasonable to think that this clod of earth should be so full of life, and that in higher and purer regions there should not be a richer plenitude of life, or of such inhabitants as live nobler and more excellent lives than we. And,

4. For aught we know, death never reaches higher than this earth of ours, and what is in a nearer vicinity to it; and that, therefore, there be vast and ample regions, incomparably beyond the range of our eye or thought, where now no death ever comes, after the detrusion of the first revolters from those bright regions. When we are told, our Lord Jesus

Christ is "ascended far above all heavens,[1]"—as it were a fond attempt to pretend to count them, so it were rash philosophizing to go about to describe them. But can we suppose them spacious wild wastes? or not suppose them replenished with numberless numbers of excellent creatures that, in their confirmed state, fear no death; and continually pay a willing, joyful homage to their great Preserver? For "every knee must bow to him, of things in heaven."[2] And when we are told,[3] "God hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name," etc.: and, "That he is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him;"[4] though we cannot form distinct thoughts what those dynasties, principalities, and dominions are, yet we cannot but suppose those unconceivably vast and ample regions fully peopled with immortal inhabitants, that "reign in life," in a more excellent sense. For it being said our Lord ascended far above all heavens, "that he might fill all things,"[5] this must suppose suitable recipients. And if his influences reach down in such plenty to our minute earth,[6] how copious are they there!

5. Consider that here where death has made its inroad, though the apostate spirits surround us, and encompass this earth of ours, and go to and fro throwing death among us everywhere; yet even here is a glorious offspring continually arising, the Redeemer's seed, in whom a divine life is gradually springing up from age to age. So that, at length, they make a "great multitude which no man can number, standing before the throne, clothed with white robes, and" (as ensigns of victory) "having palms in their hands."[7] Here is life then disseminated through all this death that enwraps our world, which for aught we know, is the centre of death; it may be here, for aught we can tell, and nowhere else; here, or hereabouts; and yet even *here*, a holy divine life is insinuating and spreading itself, even among us over

[1] Eph. iv. 10. [2] Phil. ii. 10. [3] Eph. i. 20, 21. [4] 1 Pet. iii. 22.
[5] Eph. iv. 10. [6] As verse 11—13. [7] Rev. vii. 9.

whom "death has reigned;" and there are great numbers, that having "received abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."[1] Here is supposed a kingdom, with a counter-kingdom, and one head against another; one that brought in death and condemnation upon the world, but another that brings in righteousness and life. And that here, even in this lower region, the Redeemer should have so large a portion,—we know not how large,—this very much narrows the confines of death. And let it be further considered,

6. That where death shall be perpetual, it is there but self-procured. They only lie under death, that loved it. "All they that hate me, love death."[2] They enwrap themselves in death, they "make a covenant with it." That sin, which is death, which carries death and hell in itself, *that* they loved: it was so, it is true, with the rest, that finally perish not; but it was not always so. The grace of God made a difference,—not to be quarrelled at, when, striving with many, it is victorious with some. But of those with whom it is not so, it must be said, as their final, never-altered sense even to the last, they would not be plucked out of the gulf, that deadly gulf, where they therefore lie, as in their most agreeable element. And let it further be considered,

7. That for the death that shall be perpetual, it is to be confined, and go no further. Before, it was diffused and continually more and more diffusing itself. But in the future state of things, when time has run to its period and the affairs of it are shut up by the final judgment, "Death and hell are now to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death."[3] All death is now to be gathered into death, hell into hell. It shall be contracted, gathered into itself. It is true it will be therefore consummate, finished, perfect in its kind, or full of itself, as that which is without mixture cannot but be: as was noted before, here will be pure death, without mixture, and which therefore will have no allay. But then, whereas formerly it ranged to and

[1] Rom. v. 17. [2] Prov. viii. 36. [3] Rev. xx. 14.

fro uncontrolled, now it is confined to its own narrower circle, and can have no new subject; and shall therefore give no further trouble or disturbance to the rest of God's creation. Moreover, consider,

Lastly. That this victory will not be gradual only, but total and entire. Everything of mortality that was hanging about these glorious victors, shall be swallowed up in perfect and in endless life. Death is unstung first, disarmed, and then easily overcome. Its sting is said to be sin, the deadliest thing in death: a plain further proof, by the way, the apostle intended death also in the moral sense. And the insulting inquiry: "Where is it?" implies it is not anywhere to be found, and signifies a total abolition of it; and, by consequence, must infer that everything of death besides must, as to them, for ever cease and be no more: which also the phrase of "swallowing up" doth with great emphasis express. And this completes the vindication of Providence, that is, in this whole affair; and not only vindicates, but magnifies the conduct of the supreme Disposer of all things. For by this means, as his wisdom, power and goodness are most highly illustrated; so the trial of his people's faith, (the great instrument of this their victory, as well as of that over the world),[1] "is found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;"[2] and they find, what, by patient continuance in well-doing, they were enjoined to seek, (which shows they were not vainly put upon so noble a pursuit,) honour, glory, immortality, to their actual attainment of eternal life.[3]

Now therefore shall this saying be made good in its fullest sense; and if there shall be such a victory, so glorious a one, won at last, surely we should be tuning our instruments, and labouring to get our hearts into a frame to sing the ἐπινίκιον, the triumphant song,[4] and conclude it, as *there, with* "Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."[5]

[1] 1 John v. 4. [2] 1 Pet. iv. 7. [3] Rom. ii. 7.
[4] Verses 55, 56. [5] Verse 57.

Funeral Sermons for Ministers.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR

THAT FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH,

WHO DECEASED JULY 4, 1682, IN THE SIXTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS AGE.

TO THE REVEREND

MR. SAMUEL FAIRCLOUGH, MR. JOHN FAIRCLOUGH,
MR. GEORGE JONES, MR. RICHARD SHUTE,

WITH THEIR PIOUS CONSORTS,

THE BRETHREN AND SISTERS OF THE DECEASED
MR. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH.

MY WORTHY FRIENDS,

It is, I apprehend, a grievous thing to you, to be destitute of the wonted solace you have taken in those your most delectable relatives, the father and the elder brother of a family, whereof you were the genuine or the ingrafted branches. Whether nature or choice gave you your interest, you had a common concern and comfort in it; and indeed, from a love too little common to the rest of the world. The love that hath so observedly flourished among you and been your collective, unitive bond, as it hath shown itself to be of a higher than the common kind, demonstrated its own Divine Original, and that it had its root in heaven; so have its *effects* been a demonstration what such a love can do for the cherishing of union, not only in a private family, but in the church and family of the living God also; and how little necessary it is unto a union, even *there*, that there be a sameness of sentiments and practices in every little punctilio; for a disagreement wherein, too many have thought themselves licensed to hate and even destroy one another. As God himself was the fountain, so he was the first object of that love with you. And as your love to him caused your entire devotedness to his interest, so your

mutual love united your hearts (according to your several capacities) in serving it; without grudging or hard thoughts, that each one served it not exactly in the same way. By that love you have been undivided in your joys and sorrows, in reference to one another. While your very eminent father survived, how gladly did you pay a joint reverence and duty to him! what a glory was his hoary head unto you! This your worthy brother was the next resort and centre of your united respect and delight. I doubt not you feel your loss as to both, which—though God had made a former breach upon you—the longer continuance as well as the pleasantness of the enjoyment, cannot but have made the more sensible unto you. We are somewhat apt to plead a *prescription* for our more continued comforts, but you know how little that avails against a *statute;* as that (for instance) by which it is appointed *that all must die;* nor is it to be regretted that the absolute Lord of all should pluck in pieces our earthly families, for the building and completing his own in heaven.

What I have said of this your excellent brother, in the close of the following discourse, is but a small part of what you know. The saying it serves for the solace of the survivors, not the advantage of the dead[1]; and the solace is real and great, when *imitation* makes all that is commendable *our own*, and most intimate to ourselves. It is otherwise but a faint comfort to have been related to an excellent person. When a limb is cut off, the soul retires to the remaining parts. May a double portion of the Spirit and Life, which were so copious and vigorous in the deceased, abound unto you! And I should be very faulty, if I put not in for some share with you, who must profess myself a great sharer in your affliction and loss; and

Your very affectionate brother,

And servant in our Lord,

J. H.

[1] August. de Cur. pro Mort. Gerend.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT FAITHFUL AND LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD FAIRCLOUGH.

MATTHEW xxv. 21.

"HIS LORD SAID UNTO HIM, WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT: THOU HAST BEEN FAITHFUL OVER A FEW THINGS, I WILL MAKE THEE RULER OVER MANY THINGS: ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD."

It may seem somewhat incongruous, and an indecency, that this memorial of our worthy friend should be now solemnized so long after his very remains are gone from off the face of the earth. But two things concurred to make the delay necessary and unavoidable; namely, that his own desire, expressed in his will, limited the performance of this office to the person upon whom it now falls; and that my own great infirmities, before the time of his sickness and death,—which made it more likely he should have done this part for me, than I for him,—had obliged me to begin a course for the repairing of languishing health, which required some weeks' attendance abroad, and which could not be sooner over.

But if our business were only to mourn and lament our own, and the more common loss, it were not yet too late. The mention of his name, the worthy Mr. Richard Fairclough, is enough to open fresh springs,—calling to remembrance such a brother, such a friend, such a preacher of the word of life, as he was.

And it should do it most of all upon the most common account. Whom would it not induce to mourn over this forlorn world, to see that everything that is more excellent, more pure, more desirable, more capable of being useful in it, God is gathering up out of it? O how much of spirit and life is gone from it, when one such man dies! How are we to mourn over the world as dying gradually the worst sort of death, when the holy, divine life is thus exhaled out of it, and is expiring by degrees!

But come, we have somewhat else to do than mourn; all this tends to make a glorious heaven: one bright star the more is now added to it; there is nothing of this holy life lost; whatsoever of excellency, purity, goodness, life, loveliness, and love of that divine kind, vanishes from among us, is but transferred to its own native place, returns to its proper element, as the forsaken dust hath to its own. Heaven hath its part out of every such person,—the seat of all life, purity, and goodness; as the earth draws into its bosom its own terrene part; not without a sacredness, and a rich perfume adhering to that also.

And as it is not our only or more principal business to mourn, so nor is it to relieve and fortify ourselves against mourning. We have somewhat to do diverse from them both, and that is more considerable than either of them. We are chiefly so to consider his death as may best serve the purposes of our own yet continuing life, which was the scope of that desire of his signified by his will, that "an instructive sermon" might be, upon that occasion, preached to the people. We are to set ourselves to learn from it what doth most concern our own daily practice and hope; so to acquit ourselves as not to neglect the duty of good and faithful servants to our common Lord, nor to come short of their reward.

And to this purpose we are more to consider his life than his death; the life which he hath lived on earth, and the life which, we have reason not to doubt, he doth live in heaven.

Nor could my thoughts reflect upon any portion of Scripture more fit for our purpose, or that was more suitable to him and us; that is, that could more aptly serve to describe him, and instruct ourselves; nor have I known any person to have left the world, within my time, to whom this text of Scripture might more fitly be applied.

I shall only observe, and insist upon these two heads of discourse from it.

The character of such a servant, and the treatment which he finds at last, from his heavenly Master.

First, his character. He is said to have "done well," or it is said to him, εὖ, "well"—no more is there in the Greek text—and then he is further bespoken as a good and faithful servant more generally, and particularly his fidelity is commended in reference to the special trust and charge which is implied to have been committed to him, "Thou hast been faithful in a few things;" I have not over-charged thee, and thou hast acceptably discharged thyself.

Some think this, and the whole parable, to belong only to the ministers of the gospel, the servants of Christ in that special sense. I do not see a reason for that restriction; the words are of themselves capable of being extended further to the faithful servants of Christ, in whatsoever capacity; though being spoken to the disciples, as from the continuation of the discourse, (with *this* Evangelist,) from the beginning of the foregoing chapter may be collected, it seems not unfit to allow them a more particular reference to their special office and trust.

And here we must note that these words of commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant," do speak both the truth of the thing, and the judgment and estimate which his Lord makes thereof accordingly.

We are now to consider them under the former notion, as they express the truth of the thing, the matter of fact; whereof we cannot have a more certain account than, as here we have it, from his mouth who employed him, was his

constant Supervisor, must be his final Judge, and will be his bountiful Rewarder at length.

We shall here, in opening his character, note, I. Some things leading and introductive, or that belong to his entrance into this service. And, II. Some things that belong to his performance, afterward.

I. For the introductive, supposed part of his character.

1. He is one that hath disclaimed all former and other masters, all in co-ordination; for of such, no man can serve two. "Other lords had dominion" over him, but by their usurpation, and his unjust consent, who was not his own and had no right to dispose of himself. The faithful servant repents and retracts those former engagements as bonds of iniquity by which he will be no longer held; renounces any former inconsistent master or service. A truly subordinate master he must own, for the same reason upon which he acknowledges the Supreme; and do all that such derived authority challenges, by His direction who gave it; otherwise, he hath learned "to call no man master on earth."

2. He is one that hath by covenant, surrendered and resigned himself to this great Lord, and His service. Some relations have their foundation in nature, this of servants to a master,—we except slaves,—in their consent, or in mutual contract. And though this general relation between God and man have the most deeply natural foundation imaginable, whereupon all are His servants, yet the special relation must have the other ground; namely, that of consent or contract superadded; not to give God a right to our service, but more expressly and effectually to oblige ourselves to it, and that we may have a right to his rewards. It is but acknowledging and recognising his former right in us, which is part, and the initial part, of our duty to him. He requires and justly insists upon it, to be acknowledged as our only rightful Lord; which till we do, we are in rebellion against him, and in the condition of servants broke away from their masters, runaways, fugitives, and who keep ourselves out of the family: and though that cannot however destroy his right, yet it is

inconsistent with our duty, for our service must be throughout voluntary; and with our reward, for nothing that is not voluntary is rewardable. Therefore the good and faithful servant in the text, is one that affects and chooses the state first, and says with the psalmist,[1] "Thy servant who is devoted to thy fear;" and[2] "O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds." He doth, as is required,[3] "yield himself to God," and all his parts and powers "servants of righteousness unto holiness." He reckons it neither dutiful towards God nor comfortable to himself, to do Him only occasional service, but *ad libitum*, and as an unrelated person. He thinks it not honourable to the great Lord of heaven and earth but to borrow, as it were, another's servant, nor can he satisfy himself not to be of the family; therefore he consents first to the relation, and enters himself his covenant-servant. Faithfulness supposes having covenanted, and hath the same reference to our part of the covenant that God's faithfulness hath to His.

3. He is one that hath thereupon made it his earnest study to know his Lord's will. His first inquiry is, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He is solicitous to understand the duty of his station:[4] "I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies." To enter one's self the servant of another without any concern to know the business of his place, shows an insincere mind, and argues he hath more a design to serve himself upon his master, than to serve him.

4. He is one that hath an inclination to the work he is to do, when he knows it; a *προθυμία*, an inclining bent of mind to it; that which the Scripture means by having "the law of God written in the heart," spoken of our Lord himself in reference to that peculiar service he was to perform: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: yea, thy law is in my heart:"[5] who though he were a Son, yet taking the form of a servant,

[1] Ps. cxix. 38. [2] Ps. cxvi. 16. [3] Rom. vi. 13, 19.
[4] Ps. cxix. 125. [5] Ps. xl. 8.

applied himself to that severe part assigned him with a most willing mind; and had, hereupon, the highest approbation imaginable:[1] "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." And it is spoken of all the inferior true servants of God, besides:[2] "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." It is the same thing with being "God's workmanship, created unto good works;"[3] and with that "readiness" to every good work,—ἑτοίμους εἶναι.[4] If a man's heart be not so framed to God's service, how awkwardly and untowardly does he go about anything that is enjoined him; he is habitually "disobedient, and to every good work reprobate."[5]

II. And for that part of the character, which being a good and faithful servant includes,—

1. He is one that endeavours to extend his obedience to the whole compass of his duty, hath a universal respect to all God's commandments, is not partial in the law.

2. He peculiarly minds the work most of his own station; thinks it not enough or possible to be a good Christian, and at the same time an ill magistrate, minister, parent, master of a family, or servant in it, if it be his lot to be in any of these capacities.

3. He is diligent in all the service that belongs to him any way; "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."[6]

4. He is, with most delight, exercised in the most spiritual part of his work. In the great, vital acts of faith—love, self-devoting; and those most immediately proceeding from them—meditation, prayer, and praise.

5. He balks not the most hazardous or more costly part: thinks it mean to serve God at no expense, or with what costs him nothing: measures not his duty by the advantage or safety of his own secular interest; so as to decline it when nothing is to be got by it, or if anything be in danger to be lost.

[1] Isa. xlii. 1. [2] Jer. xxxi. 33. [3] Ephes. ii. 10.
[4] Tit. iii. 1. [5] Chap. i. 16. [6] Rom. xii. 11.

6. He grudges not that others are less exposed to danger in their work than he; and have that liberty of serving God, which he hath not.

Let me seriously recommend this property and disposition of a faithful servant, to my brethren in the ministry. While some have opportunity of serving our great and common Lord without fear of the interruption and suffering to which *we* are liable, and when we have reason to judge they do it with sincerity, (though we may think they gained their greater liberty by their mistake,) there can be no more genuine expression of our fidelity and sincere devotedness to our Master's interest, than to behold, with complacency, all the good which we observe done by them. If the great apostle[1] "rejoiced," and declared he would rejoice, that "Christ was preached, though not sincerely, and whether in pretence or truth," much more should we, when we ought to judge that he is sincerely preached. And if he envied not those that preached Christ, even "of envy," how horrid would it be, should we behold with envy, what we are to suppose done out of love and good-will! They are great admirers of themselves, and lovers of some interest of their own more than his, that cannot endure to see his work done by other hands than theirs; or that have nothing of that disposition in them which those words express: 'Let him increase, and me decrease.'

7. He is, much less, apt to *smite* his fellow-servants, or hinder them in their work, unless they will work by his rule and measure, unprescribed by their Lord Himself. He takes no pleasure to see the hands tied up of useful labourers in the harvest, wishes not their number diminished; but, because "the harvest is really plenteous, but the labourers are few," rather "prays the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest."[2]

If any, of their own private inclination, would have the necessary work of their Lord hindered, and take pleasure in the exclusion of industrious labourers for their conscientious

[1] Phil. i. 15—18. [2] Matt. ix. 37, 38.

disuse of things, by their *own confession* not necessary; good Lord! what spirit are they of? I understand it not, nor let my soul enter into their secret! I had rather a thousandfold bear their anger than be of their spirit! Would any faithful servant rather wish his master's work should be in any part undone, than done by those he dislikes, upon no more important reason than that their clothes, perhaps, are not of the same colour with his?

But thanks be to God that among those that differ from each other in the lesser things, there are so many that rejoice, being under restraints themselves, for the liberty of others, and that mourn, while they enjoy themselves an ample liberty, for others' restraints; and among whom there is no other contention but who shall think and speak and act with most kindness towards one another: and that, not whole parties, but an ill mind and spirit only in some persons, can be charged with what so much unbecomes faithful fellow-servants.

8. He is less at leisure to mind what others do or do not, than what he is to do himself: is above all things solicitous "to prove his own work, that he may have rejoicing in himself, and not in another."[1]

9. He esteems the utmost he can do but little, and counts, when he hath done his best, he is "an unprofitable servant."

10. He approves himself, in all that he doth, to the eye of his great Master. Here we cannot serve too much with eye service, or be too apprehensive of the constant inspection of our heavenly Lord. One may be too much a pleaser of men, but no man can too much study to please and approve himself to the eye of God.

11. He laments lost time, and labours to redeem it.

12. He greatly rejoices in the success of his work. If, for instance, it be his business to bring home souls to God, nothing is more grateful to him than to prosper in it. "My beloved, my joy, and my crown . . .;"[2] so he counts such as he can make proselytes to Christ: "I have no greater

[1] Gal. vi. 4. [2] Phil. iv. 1.

joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."[1] It is said of Barnabas,—a great number believing, and turning to the Lord,[2]—that, "when he saw the grace of God, he was glad; for" it is added "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost."

13. He loves his work and his Master, is willing to have his "ear bored," and serve Him for ever. If any thought arises of changing, he presently represses it by some seasonable check and counter-thought,[3] and confirms his resolution of cleaving to Him unto the end.

14. He puts the highest value upon such present encouragements from his Lord, as are most expressive of peculiar favour. The blessed God knows what is most suitable to the genius and spirit of His own new creature. They who are his sincere servants, are his sons too, born of him; and to the divine and heavenly nature in them those things are most agreeable that are most spiritual, and whereof others, of terrene minds, no more know the value than that dunghill creature did of the gem it found there. They must have great stores of "corn, wine, and oil." His better born servants are of a more excellent spirit, and better pleased with the "light of his countenance;" he differently treats them accordingly: as that victorious Persian monarch,[4] entertaining at a feast the principal men of his army, gave among them costly gifts; but for Chrysantas,[5] a more peculiar favourite, ἐφίλησε προσαγαγόμενος, he only 'drew him near to him, and gave him a kiss,'—which was intended by the one, received by the other, and envied by a third,[6] as an expression of more special kindness. And of the Divine

[1] 3 John 4. [2] Acts xi. 22, 23.

[3] As holy Mr. Herbert:—

"... Well, I will change the service, and go seek
Some other Master out.
Ah, my dear God! though I be clean forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not.'

[4] Cyrus. [5] Xen. de Pæd. Cyr.

[6] Artabazus, who had a golden cup given him at the same time.

love, which that borrowed expression signifies, pious souls upon all occasions show their highest value.[1]

15. He trusts his Master for his final reward, and is content to wait for it as long as He thinks fit to defer. St. Paul professes himself "a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, in hope of eternal life," which "He that could not lie" had promised; and hereupon resolvedly encounters all the difficulties of that hazardous service.

Secondly. The acceptance and reward which such a servant finds above. His acceptance is expressed in the same words (as was said) which have generally given us his character; not only showing what he was and did, but that his Lord esteemed and passes an approving judgment of him, as it was not to be doubted he would, accordingly.

Concerning this judgment we are to note, both what it *supposes* and what it *includes*.

I. It supposes both an account taken how this servant demeaned himself, and a rule according whereto the matters to be accounted for were to be examined and judged of.

1. That our Lord calls his servants to an account; so we find it expressly said, "After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them."[2] And here it is implied, when he says, "Well done . . ." it implies he takes cognizance, and inquires whether they have done well or ill; he is not indifferent or regardless how they quit and behave themselves; nor doth he pronounce rashly and at random, without searching into the matter. "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God."[3]

2. That there is some certain stated rule, by which their doings must be measured. *Well doing* stands in conformity to some rule or other, and what is the next and most immediate rule of our duty is also the rule of God's judgment; such a rule it must suppose, as according whereto a true judgment is possible of our having done well. That cannot be the law of works, according whereto "no flesh can be

[1] Cant. i. 2. [2] Matt. xxv. 19. [3] Rom. xiv. 12.

justified in his sight;" it must therefore be the law of grace: and so this servant is only said to have done well according to the ἐπιείκεια *evangelica.* The indulgence of the gospel can say εὖ, "it is well," to that which the rigour of the law would condemn. *Bonum oritur ex causis integris,* etc.; well-doing arises out of the concurrence of all requisites, evil from any the least defect; and so indeed whatever the rule be, all things must concur that are requisite to acceptance, by that rule. But here simply everything of duty is requisite; so that the condition of acceptance and life was not to be distinguished—as a thing of less latitude—from mere duty in its utmost extent. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." [1] "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." [2]

II. This judgment includes

1. Well-pleasedness: εὖ, 'It is well,' as much as to say, 'I like well thy way and work, it pleases and is grateful to me, and so art thou.'

2. An acknowledgment of his title to the designed reward, according to the gospel constitution. It is said to be 'well,' not only according to the absolute and abstract consideration of what was done; but according to its relative consideration and prospect to what was to ensue: and therefore follows, in the subjoined words, the collation of the reward,—of which reward we have here a twofold expression: "I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"I will make thee ruler over many things." In the Evangelist Luke's account of this parable, (if his account refer to the same thing, as spoken at the same time; which some of old, upon the manifold diversity, have doubted,—how reasonably I shall not here dispute,) it is said: 'Have thou authority over so many cities.' Either expression represents the remuneration here vouchsafed, by a metaphor which nearly approaches that very usual one by which the felicity of saints is represented under the notion of a kingdom; as

[1] James ii. 10. [2] Gal. iii. 10.

much as to say, Thou shalt have an honourable prefecture, be a glorious viceroy; shalt, according to thy capacity, share with me in the dignity of my royal state. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him."[1]—This I pass, and shall stay a little more upon the other expression, which is plainer and without a metaphor.

"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord:" wherein, as expositors observe, our Lord slides insensibly out of the parable into the thing designed by it; using words indifferently applicable to either, but such as wherein he might be easily understood ultimately to mean the joys and glories of the other world or state. Expressions serving to signify, as an ancient[2] speaks, *τὴν πᾶσαν μακαριότητα*, the sum of all felicity; as what can more fitly signify that, than joy, the joy of his Lord and whereinto he was to enter? Let us consider these severally, though but briefly.

i. *Joy;* as much as to say, 'The laborious part is over with thee, now follows thy rest and reward.' Joy, the very notion whereof is rest, *quies appetitus in appetibili*,[3] as it is aptly defined. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." When the dark shady vale is passed over, with much toil, the path of life leads into that "presence where is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."[4] The fulness of joy speaks the purity of it; that is pure which is *plenum sui*, etc., 'full of itself,' and without mixture of anything else; which hath so entirely all degrees of itself as not to admit the least degree of its contrary; such is this, it is joy and no sorrow with it, perfect and most complete joy. This cannot therefore be meant of a slight and momentary act, but a perfect and permanent state of joy; which state is made up by the continual concurrence of a twofold everlasting perfection; namely, objective, subjective.

Objective: That there be a perfect, and never-failing good to be enjoyed.

Subjective: That there be a perfect and immutable

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 12.
[2] Chrysost. *in loc.*
[3] Aquin.
[4] Ps. xvi. 11.

contemperation, or a thorough undecaying disposition of the subject, to the enjoyment of it.

From these two cannot but result a most permanent, everlasting state of joy. And of the concurrence of these two, the Holy Scripture sufficiently assures us when it makes God himself to be the object of our eternal vision, in that other state; and tells us that in order thereto, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is:" signifying all that proportion and agreeableness of the blessed soul to the beatific object, which is requisite to a most pleasant, perfect, and perpetual enjoyment.

ii. This joy is more expressly specified by being called the joy of *our Lord;* which signifies it to be not only the joy whereof he is the *object*, a joy to be taken in him, as before; but whereof he is the *author*. As he now "puts gladness into the heart"[1] in this our imperfect state, he is not less the author of our most perfect joy. And also, that whereof he is the *possessor;* as much as to say, 'Enter into that joy that is now to be common to me and thee, and wherein thou shalt partake with me.' So one glosses the words:[2] 'Be thou partaker of the same joy with thy Lord, enjoy thou the same joy that thy Lord enjoys.' Amazing thought! yet so Scripture speaks: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."[3] "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them:" and, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may *behold* my glory, which thou hast given me:"[4] and that *beholding* cannot mean a merely contemplative, but a fruitive intuition. "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,"[5] (*συνδοξασθῶμεν*). Other joys are in comparison mean and sordid; this is the highest and most excellent, for it is the divine joy.

iii. It is *that* they are to enter into; which notes both the plenitude of their right,—their Lord bids them enter; and the plenitude of this joy itself,—they are to enter into it;

[1] Ps. iv. 7. [2] Esto particeps, etc. Luc. Brugens. *in loc.*
[3] John xii. 26. [4] John xvii. 22—24. [5] Rom. viii. 17.

and the dominion it must for ever have over them; they are to be absorpt of it, lose themselves in it, not so much to possess it, as be possessed by it. And the *perpetuity* is intimated of that possession; we are told of their entrance into it, nothing of their passing out of it any more; the last thing we hear of them is that they are gone into joy.

Now let us see what brief useful reflections are to be made, upon all this. And,

I. How blessed a thing is it to be a faithful servant of Christ! If any have not yet learned to value his service for itself, let them make their estimate by the end of it, and by what is even at present most certainly annexed to it. To be accepted with him, to appear gracious in his eyes! An *euge* from such a mouth! 'Where the word of a king is, there is power.' How joyful a sound do these words carry from the mouth of God: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" The Persic version—as it is rendered—most significantly paraphrases this passage: 'The owner of the money received him pleasantly, and uttered words to him grateful to his heart, saying, Well done, O thou good and faithful servant,' etc.[1] What can be more grateful and reviving to the heart of a good man than that the glorious Lord of heaven and earth should say to him, "Well done?" To have him say to us, as to Moses: "Thou hast found grace in my sight:"[2] to have gained "this testimony," as Enoch did,[3] "that we have pleased God;" and that our case might truly admit of such an angelical salutation, though upon a less peculiar account, "Hail thou that art highly favoured,"—how great a thing is it! So great a thing in the apostle's account, that living or dying, "being in the body or out of the body" seemed little things to him in comparison of it: "He was willing rather to be absent," but is more solicitous "whether present, or absent, that he might be accepted of him."[4] Yea, and the more abject

[1] Dominus pecuniæ illum blandè excepit, et cordi verba grata dedit; Euge, inquit, O bone et fidelis serve, etc.

[2] Exod. xxxiii. 12. [3] Heb. xi. 5. [4] 2 Cor. v. 8, 9.

spirit of a very Cain resents so deeply his *not* being accepted, that his troubled mind imprints characters of sorrow in his face, shows itself in a fallen countenance and dejected looks.

What ingenuous mind but knows how to value even the unprofitable kindness of a mean friend? Can the love of a God seem little with us? It adds greatly to the value of mere kindness, abstracted from beneficence, if it be borne me by a judicious, wise person; such a one honours whom he loves; we less esteem the love of a fool. There can be no greater contempt of God than to make light of being accepted with him.

But how transporting a thing should it be, besides the present sense of such acceptance, which (with more or less expressness) accompanies diligence and fidelity in his service; to have it judicially declared with solemnity, and publicly said to us before angels and men: "Well done, good and faithful servant!" When so great consequences depend and are to ensue upon it, as that it should be further said, 'Come, be thou ruler over many things, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, enter into the joy of your Lord;' who would think meanly of being the accepted servant of the most high God? They that finally despise so privileged a state will see it with their eyes exemplified in others, but shall never taste the sweetness of it.

II. How easily accountable is it why our Lord lets his servants suffer hard things in this world awhile! *He* may permit it to be so, who hath it in his power "to make their sorrow be turned into joy." It is not strange if "weeping endure with them for a night," unto whom such "joy is coming in the morning;" it is unworthy to repine in this case. It is want of foresight that makes any wonder and censure. Consider well those weighty words,[1] "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;

[1] 1 Peter iv. 12, 13.

that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

III. How wicked and foolish a thing is it to refuse this service! It is horridly unjust towards our most rightful Lord, and most imprudent for ourselves. Do men know what they do in this? whose right they invade and resist? and what cruelty they use towards their own souls?

IV. How much to be lamented is the condition of the sinful world, who so generally decline this service, and make themselves slaves, in the meantime, to the worst of masters? How do men drudge to the devil? What slaves are they to themselves and their own vile lusts? as indeed no man serves himself, but hath a fool and a mad tyrant (as one well says) for his master. We do not enough live up to the principles of our religion, while we consider not with more compassion the condition of infatuated mankind in this respect.

V. What may be expected by unfaithful negligent servants that hide their talent in a napkin? The others' joys serve to measure their sorrows: what a killing word will it be, when instead of "Well done, good and faithful servant," it shall be said, "Thou wicked, and slothful servant!" And instead of "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," they must hear, and feel, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."[1]

VI. See what estimate we are to make of the nature of God, especially of his large, munificent goodness, which is his nature,—"God is love:" for consider the various emanations and discoveries of it, which may here be taken notice of.

1. That he should seek to have any for servants—which the text supposeth that he doth—in this world of ours! A world of apostate, degenerous, impure, impotent creatures; disaffected to him and his government; hating him, and, as in themselves they are, hateful to him: he who hath so little need of servants for any real use; who can do all things with a word! and,—if he thought it fit to have them for state, and as a thing becoming his majesty and greatness,—is

[1] Matt. xxv. 30.

attended above by so excellent God-like creatures, so suitable and obsequious, so powerful and agile! "Those ministers of his that do his pleasure, hearkening to the voice of his word;" a world of ministering spirits, that might be used for purposes less kind to us than they are! That he should *seek* servants among us!—for his *having* them implies it; who ever served him unsought unto?—invite men into his service with so importunate solicitation, whom he might despise for their vileness and destroy for their rebellion, which he can in a moment! And that he should seek *such* to become his servants, not with indifferency, but with so great earnestness, and use afterwards so various endeavours to retain them in his service! When they gradually decline, that he so graciously upholds them; when ready to break faith with him and quit his service, that by so apt methods he confirms them; when they actually wander and turn vagabonds, that he should be so intent to reduce them,—how admirable is all this! View the whole case at once. They neglect his first invitations, he repeats and inculcates them; they faint, he encourages and supports them; they revolt, he follows to bring them back: the cause of our admiration still rises higher and higher. How much is it, in this last instance, above all human measures! Most men would disdain so to sue to servants that forsake them, and are loth to confess their real need and want of them were it never so great. The Cynic scorned to look after his servant that left him, counting it a disgrace, when Manes thought he could live without Diogenes, that Diogenes should not be able to live without Manes.[1] The all-sufficient Deity stoops to that which indigency and wretchedness think even too mean for them!

2. Consider the frankness of his acceptance, even of the best: for how many omissions, how much laziness and sloth, how many incogitancies and mistakes, how much real disservice must he forgive, when he accepts them, and says yet, 'It is well done'! How little is it they do at the best, and

[1] Seneca.

how unprofitable to him! and yet that little also he forms and even creates them to, and continually succours and assists them in it; "works in them to will, and to do," otherwise nothing at all would be done; yet how full, how complacential his acceptance is!

3. Consider the largeness and bounty of his rewards, too large for our expression or conception. So that we even say most to it, when—even lost in wonder—we only admire and say nothing.

4. Consider the kind of the service which he thus bespeaks, accepts, and rewards. The best and most acceptable service any are capable of doing him, is when they accept him, take and choose him to be their portion and blessedness; trust, love, and delight in him as such, live upon his fulness, and, according to their several stations, persuade as many as they can to do so too. They that in the most peculiar sense are his ministers or servants, as they are more earnestly intent upon this, and win more souls, are the more amply and gloriously rewarded. "They that turn many to righteousness, shine as stars." And for all the rest of his servants, wherein do they serve him most, but when by their converse and example they induce others to entertain good thoughts of God and religion, and thereupon to make the same choice which they have made, and become seriously religious; which is most certainly connected with their being happy, and indeed in greatest part *is* their very happiness itself: and when they relieve, support, encourage, and help on, those that are in the way, or whom they are endeavouring to bring into the way, to final blessedness? We as much need our servants, as they can us; they are our living, reasonable, but most necessary instruments. The whole universe of created beings subsists by mutual dependencies, the uncreated Being without any. Creatures are made to need one another; infinite self-fulness, not capable of receiving additions, is most highly gratified by our cheerful reception of its communications.

Let us learn now to conceive of God answerably to all this.

We do him not right, that we consider not his admirable goodness in so plain instances of it with more frequent seriousness and intention of mind and spirit, and show ourselves stupid, unapprehensive creatures. Have we a thinking faculty about us? a power to use thoughts? and can we use it upon anything more evident, more considerable, or that more concerns us? or do we never use it less pertinently?

VII. How unreasonable is it, either to quit the service of our blessed Lord or to serve him dejectedly! Quit it! Who hath more right in us? or where will we mend ourselves? Oh! the treacherous folly of apostasy; and how severely is it wont to be animadverted on![1] It is said, Rehoboam "forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him;" and what followed? Shishak, the king of Egypt, comes against them with a great power, and God sends them this message by Shemaiah the prophet; that because they had forsaken him,[2] therefore he also had left them in the hands of Shishak: and afterwards, that though upon their humbling themselves he would not quite destroy them, but grant them some deliverance; yet he adds: "Nevertheless they shall be his" (that is, Shishak's) "servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."[3] Since they would abandon God and the true religion, he would, by a very sensible instruction and costly experience, teach them to distinguish and understand the difference, and make them know when they have a good master. And if we serve him despondingly and with dejected spirits, how causeless a reproach do we cast upon him and his service! It is a greater iniquity than is commonly considered; implies dislike of his work and the rules and orders of the family, impatiency of the restraints of it, distrust of his power to protect or bounty to reward us; and we may expect it to be resented accordingly. So we sometimes find it hath been:[4] "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the

[1] 2 Chron. xii. 1. [2] Ver. 5. [3] Ver. 8. [4] Deut. xxviii. 47, 48.

Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee."

VIII. How are we concerned to follow the example and expect the acceptance and reward of any such faithful servant of Christ!

And that we may imitate such a good and faithful servant, let me briefly set the example of such a one before you in this excellent person lately taken from among us; which were it possible to represent entirely, were one of the fairest copies to write after, that this, or perhaps many former ages, could afford us.

That indeed which it is fit should first be noted of him, is least of all imitable; I mean his natural temper (with its more immediate dependencies) which no man can have the privilege to choose. His indeed was one of the happiest that I ever knew, and did so set off all that was superadded and inserted into it by human culture or Divine grace, as an advantageous setting doth the lustre of a diamond. He had all the advantages of education, from his childhood, which the pious care of an affectionate, prudent, learned father could give him, that were proper and preparatory to the function he was intended for; namely, that of the sacred ministry: an office whereof his excellent father, (the eminent, holy, heavenly, reverend, ancient Mr. Fairclough of Suffolk, whose name in that country hath still a grateful savour with all good men of whatsoever persuasion,) showed his high esteem and love, not only by the most diligent discharge of it himself, but by dedicating all his sons, which were four in number, to it; and giving his two daughters in marriage to such also: so that he was the father of a sacred tribe, an offspring and race of ministers, or that, even naturally, united with such. This was the eldest of his children, and of whose education the first care was to be taken. Scarce any mind could be more receptive of the proper impressions from an ingenuous institution. About twelve years he continued a student—whereof divers, a Fellow—and great ornament of

Emanuel College, in Cambridge, as he was also much adorned by it. He went from it furnished with such a stock of rational, substantial, as well as polite literature, that showed him to have been no loiterer there. He was a man of a clear, distinct understanding, of a very quick, discerning and penetrating judgment; that would, on a sudden (as I have sometimes observed in discourse with him) strike through knotty difficulties into the inward centre of truth, with such a felicity, that things seemed to offer themselves to him, which are wont to cost others a troublesome search. Nor were his notions merely book-learned, borrowed from systems, and taken on trust; but formed by a due, but more speedy, comparing of things; as if truth were more akin and connatural to him than to most others; sooner digested, made his own, and inwrought into the temper and habit of his mind,—which afterwards he liked not to muddy and discompose, by busy agitations with others, about that truth which he found himself in a pleasant secure possession of; nor to contend *concerning* that which he had not found it necessary to contend *for*. He declined controversy, not from inability, but dislike; for as he less needed it for a further good end, so he was most remote from loving it for itself; he was satisfied to have attained his end, and was better pleased to know, than to seem to others that he knew. He was of curious sublime fancy, and a lofty style both in speaking and writing, even in his most familiar letters; though he industriously depressed it in his popular sermons, and other negotiations with those of meaner capacity.

But his moral and holy excellencies were his chief lustre, being in themselves of a more excellent kind, and shining in him in a very eminent degree.

The bent of his soul was towards God; I never knew any man under the more constant governing power of religion,—which made it be his business both to exercise and diffuse it to his uttermost; he was a mighty lover of God and men, and being of a lively active spirit, that love was his facile, potent mover to the doing even of all the good that could be

thought, in an ordinary way, possible to him, and more than was possible to most other men. To give a true succinct account of the complexion of his soul,—he was even made up of life and love. Such was the clearness and sincerity of his spirit, his constant uprightness and integrity, so little darkened by an evil conscience, — and indeed little ever clouded with melancholy fumes,—that he seemed to live in the constant sense of God's favour and acceptance, and had nothing to do but to serve him with his might; whence his spirit was formed to an habitual cheerfulness and seemed to feel within itself a continual calm. So undisturbed a serenity hath, to my observation, rarely been discernible in any man; nor was his a dull, sluggish peace, but vital and joyous; seldom hath that been more exemplified in any man, "To be spiritually minded is life, and peace."[1] Seldom have any lived more under the government of that kingdom, which stands "in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[2] His reverence of the Divine Majesty was most profound, his thoughts of God high and great, that seemed totally to have composed him to adoration and even made him live a worshipping life; he was not wont to speak to God or of Him at a vulgar rate; he was most absolutely resigned and given up to Him; devotedness to His interest, acquiescence in His wisdom and will, were not mere precepts with him, but habits. No man could be more deeply concerned about the affairs of religion and God's interest in the world; yet his solicitude was tempered with that stedfast trust, that it might be seen the acknowledged verities of God's governing the world, superintending and ordering all human affairs, by wise and steady counsel and almighty power,—which in most others are but faint notions,—were with him turned into living sense and vital principles, which governed his soul! Whereupon his great reverence of the majesty of God, falling into a conjunction with an assured trust and sense of His love and goodness, made that rare and happy temperament with him, which I cannot better express than by a pleasant seriousness.

[1] Rom. viii. 6. [2] Rom. xiv. 17.

What friend of his did ever, at the first congress, see his face but with a grave smile? When unexpectedly and by surprise he came in among his familiar friends, it seemed as if he had blessed the room; as if a new soul or some good genius were come among them.

I need not tell them that survive, who were nearest to him, how pleasant a relative he was; nor doth any man need to tell me, how pleasant a friend! No man ever more understood, than he, the ingenuities and delights of friendship, especially the high pleasure of gratifying and obliging another; the relishes whereof were so delicious to him, that no festival could be so grateful to any man as the opportunity was to him of making another taste and feel his kindness: nor did I ever observe anything so like a frequent fault in him, as an aptness to overvalue his friend.

He was a man of most punctual scrupulous fidelity; his word was ever with him so strictly sacred that, in the smallest matters, his appointments, though numerous, were through his great prudence so sure, that one might,—without the intervenience of extraordinary providence,—as certainly expect them as the returns of day and night: so that they that knew him, though most delighted with his society, were never wont to urge for his stay with them beyond his prefixed time, (which he commonly mentioned at his first entrance,) knowing it would be in vain.

He was of a large and great soul, comprehensive of the interests of God, the world, the church, his country, his friends, and, (with a peculiar concernedness,) of the souls of men; ready to his uttermost to serve them all. Made up of compassion towards the distressed, or delight in the good, and of general benignity towards all men, he had a soul, a life, a name, darkened with no cloud but that of his own great humility, which clouded him only to himself, but beautified and brightened him in the eyes of all others; a humility that allowed no place with him to any aspiring design or high thought that could ever be perceived by word, look, or gesture; except the high thoughts and designs

which neither ought to be excluded nor repressed. His greatest ambition was to do good, and partake it in the highest and the best kind of it; to make the nearest approaches he could to the pattern and fountain of all goodness.

And now, looking upon so qualified a person as engaged by office in a peculiar sort of service to Christ, to gather and draw in souls to him and prepare them for a blessed eternity; how great things may we expect! What do we not find?

Mells in Somersetshire was his first and only public station. Thither he was brought by so peculiar a conduct and direction of Providence, as seemed to carry with it some signification what great use he was afterwards to be of in that place.

The very reverend Dr. Whichcot, being also at that time Fellow of the same college in Cambridge, and presented to a living in that country that was in the disposition of that college, obtained of him to accompany him in a journey to visit and make some trial of the people he had been designed to take the charge of; where that so accomplished person expressed a resolution fit to be exemplary to others of profoundest learning, and which was strictly afterwards followed by this his chosen companion; preaching his first sermon, as himself was pleased to tell me, upon those words: "I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

After some time spent together here, the Doctor's affairs recalling him, for the present to Cambridge, he prevailed with our worthy friend to stay behind and supply his absence among his people.

What follows, I was informed of by another hand, but one so nearly related to this our deceased friend and so well acquainted with the more considerable occurrences of his life, as not to leave me in doubt concerning so momentous a thing as how he came to be settled in a country so remote from his own, and where he was so mere a stranger. And it fell out thus.

During his abode upon this occasion in those parts, a noted gentleman, the patron of the rectory of Mells, being at that time high sheriff of the county, sent to Mr. Fairclough, (of whose worth fame had not let him long be ignorant,) desiring him to preach the assize sermon; some circumstances having also brought the matter within so narrow a compass, that the straits of time made it necessary to press the request with more importunity than could admit of a denial. That performance was so highly acceptable, and so newly over when the patron was surprised with the tidings of the former rector of Mells' death, that he immediately told our worthy friend he could not otherwise so fitly gratify him for his sermon as by conferring upon him such a living, which, if he pleased to accept it, was his.

The opportunity of stated service in a calling to which he had most seriously devoted himself, more than the emolument (as did afterwards sufficiently appear) soon determined his thoughts and fixed him in this station. There he shone many years a bright and a lively light, a burning, as well as a shining, one: it was soon observed what a star was risen in that horizon, and a confluence was quickly gathered of such "as rejoiced in the light of it,"—which made an obscure country village soon become a most noted place. From sundry miles about, thither was the great resort; so that I have wondered to see so throng an auditory as I have sometimes had the opportunity to observe in such a place, that did usually attend his most fruitful ministry. And oh, how hath that congregation been wont to melt under his holy fervours! His prayers, sermons, and other ministerial performances had that strange pungency, quickness, and authority with them, at some times; that softness, gentleness, sweetness, alluringness at others; that one would think it scarce possible to "resist the spirit and power wherewith he spake." And the effect did in a blessed measure correspond; they became a much enlightened, knowing, judicious, convinced, reformed,—even somewhat generally and in good part a seriously religious,—people. His labours here were

almost incredible; beside his usual exercises on the Lord's-day, of praying, reading the Scriptures, preaching, catechizing, administering the sacraments, (as the occasions or stated seasons occurred,) he usually five days in the week, betimes in the morning, appeared in public; prayed, and preached an expository lecture upon some portion of the Holy Scriptures in course, to such as could then assemble,—which so many did, that he always had a considerable congregation; nor did he ever produce in public anything which did not smell of the lamp. And I know that the most eminent for quality and judgment among his hearers valued those his morning exercises for elaborateness, accuracy, instructiveness, equally with his Lord's-days sermons. Yet also he found time, not only to visit the sick, (which opportunities he caught at with great eagerness,) but also, in a continual course, all the families within his charge, and personally and severally to converse with every one that was capable; labouring to understand the present state of their souls, and applying himself to them in instructions, reproofs, admonitions, exhortations, and encouragements suitably thereto. And he went through all with the greatest facility and pleasure imaginable; his whole heart was in his work. Every day, for many years together, he used to be up by three in the morning or sooner, and to be with God (which was his dear delight) when others slept. Few men had ever less hinderance from the body or more dominion over it; a better habited mind and body have rarely dwelt together. No controversies arose among his neighbours, within his notice, which he made it not his business to get presently composed; and his help and advice was wont to be sought by persons of eminent rank and in matters of very great difficulty and importance, for that purpose: his own love of peace always inclining him, and his great prudence well enabling him, to be exceeding useful in any such case.

Nor were his labours confined within that narrower verge; his name and worth were too well known abroad, to let him be engrossed by one single parish: in how many places did

he scatter light and diffuse the knowledge of God, wheresoever, within his reach, the opportunity of a lecture, occasional or fixed, did invite!

The state of things in those days making it necessary—and not hindering—that what was to be done for the preservation of common order, must be by the spontaneous associating of the pastors of many congregations, how did he inspirit those assemblies! The deference that was given to him, even by very reverend persons of great value and much exceeding him in years, with the effectual influence he had upon all their affairs, (manifestly aiming at nothing but the promotion of religion and the common good,) were only arguments of the commanding power of true worth. And the good effects upon the people showed how much could be done by a naked, undisguised recommendation of one's self to men's consciences in the sight of God. Nor would his brethren of greatest value (and divers there were, in those parts, of very great) think it any detraction from themselves to acknowledge much more, to the wise, modest, humble activity of his spirit in their common concernments, than I shall be willing to arrogate to him. He was, upon the whole, a very public blessing in that country, while he kept his public station in it; and when the time approached of his quitting it, he eminently showed his constant, great moderation in reference to the controverted things that occasioned his doing so, in all his reasonings with his brethren about them: and it further appeared in the earnest bent of his endeavours to form the minds of his people, as much as was possible, unto future union, under the conduct of whosoever should succeed him in the serious care of their souls; and to a meek, unrepining submission to that present separation which was now to be made between him and them,—whereof the extant abridgment of sundry his later sermons to them are an abundant testimony; though such a repression of their sorrows it was not possible to them to receive, otherwise than as dutiful children are wont to do the exhortations of an affectionate, dying father, not to mourn for his death. In the

substantial things of religion, no man was more fervently zealous; about the circumstantials, none more cool and temperate.

But he could in nothing prevaricate with his once settled judgment, or depart in his practice one ace from it; yet such was the candour and softness of his spirit, that nothing could be more remote from him than to pass any harsh censures upon those that received that satisfaction in the scrupled points, which he could not: but he continued a most entire undiminished friendship with many of them (and several of eminent note, by whom also it was equally cherished on their parts) even to the last.

His great contempt of the world and remoteness from making the sacred office subservient to secular interest—a design of enriching himself by it—or more than to subsist—too soon appeared in the mean condition to which he was brought by that deprivation. For though the annual profits of his living were very considerable, yet his free but well-regulated hospitality, and large diffusive charity, (wherein his excellent consort, one of the most pious, prudent, well-accomplished matrons I ever knew, most readily concurred with him,) kept them from being superfluous or flowing into coffers. He had laid up no treasure, but in heaven; and was the son of a no-way unlike father, from whom the expectancy of a patrimonial estate could not be great, and whom (to his no small joy while he continued) he survived but a little. So that for some years, as I have heard him say, he did owe much of his subsistence to the bounty of some worthy citizens of London, whose temper it is to take more pleasure in doing such good than in having it told the world who they were.

His usefulness was such, since his deprivation,—not in serving a party, a thing too mean and little to be ever thought of by him without disdain, but,—in pressing the great and agreed things that belong to serious, living religion, that it even melts my soul to think of the overwhelming sorrows wherewith the tidings of his death must have been received by multitudes in the west, that were often wont with greatest

delight and fruit to enjoy his most lively, edifying labours.

His decease confirms it to us, once more, that nothing belonging to this world of ours, is too good to die.

But it is a great argument of God's kind propensions towards it, and speaks much of his good-will to men, that now and then such heavenly creatures are permitted to inhabit it, and such *specimina* and efforts of the Divine life to appear and be put forth in it. It shows God hath not forsaken the earth, and that his "tabernacle is with men," when any such are to be found here.

It ought to be reckoned very monitory and a great rebuke, when such are (earlier than according to natural course) taken away.

It should make us love heaven so much the better, that such as he are gathered thither: not that it needs anything to better it in itself, but that we can now better relish the thoughts that arise out of our own present knowledge; and having seen true goodness exemplified, may thence more easily take our advantage to apprehend what that state is wherein there will be so vast a collection of excellent creatures, so perfectly good, by most liberal eternal participations from the first and uncreated Good. How taking is this notion of heaven! 'I especially pronounce this holy man blessed,' saith a great man[1] in the ancient church, speaking of an excellent person deceased,[2] 'for that he hath passed from one order to another, μετετάξατο, and leaving our city, hath ascended to another city, even that of God himself; and leaving this church of ours, is gone into the church of the first-born who are written in heaven; and hath left our solemn conventions for that of myriads of angels;'—referring to that of the apostle, Heb. xii., and magnifying that πανήγυρις, that glorious convention, 'not for the multitude of the powers above only, but for the confluence of the good, with a perfect vacancy of envy, and an abounding perpetual joy and satisfaction of mind . . . . love, peace, goodness, etc., and every

[1] Chrysost. *Panegyr.* [2] Philogonius.

fruit of the Spirit in most plenteous fulness.' To this purpose he speaks; and what an amiable heaven is this!

Yea, and it may incline us to have somewhat the kinder thoughts of this our meaner *native* element, and less to regret that our earthly part should dissolve and incorporate with it, to think what rich treasure, what shrines of a lately inhabiting Deity (now become sacred dust) it hath from time to time received and transmuted into itself. How voluminously have some written of *Roma Subterranea;*[1] of the tombs of martyrs, and other excellent persons (as many of them were) collected in one little spot of this earth! And if there were as particular an account of the more refined part of subterraneous London, much more of all places where just and holy men have dropped and deposed their earthly tabernacles; how would our earth appear ennobled, and even hallowed, by such continual accessions to it in all times and ages! What a glorious host will arise and spring up, even out of one London! Is not the grave now a less gloomy thing? Who would grudge to lie obscurely awhile among them with whom we expect to rise and ascend so gloriously?

It should make us diligent in the remaining time of our abode here. What should not the expectation of such a welcome carry us through,—"Well done, good and faithful servant," etc.? How studious should we be, so to acquit ourselves, as *he* hath done! "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Let us then "be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," as knowing "our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

[1] Jo. Severanus, P. Aringhus, etc.

A SERMON

ON THE

MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF THAT REVEREND AND WORTHY SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD ADAMS, M.A.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF BRAZEN-NOSE COLLEGE IN OXFORD, AFTERWARDS MINISTER OF ST. MILDRED, BREAD-STREET, LONDON, MORE LATELY PASTOR OF A CONGREGATION IN SOUTHWARK.

WHO DECEASED FEBRUARY 7TH, 1697—8.

TO

MRS. ANNA ADAMS, WIDOW, AND COLONEL JOHN ADAMS,
BROTHER, TO THE DECEASED MR. RICHARD ADAMS.

My honoured Friends,

Death is too common a theme, and too obvious to our sense, to be thought strange, any more than that we live. But that the course of our life, as to the rise, progress, and period of it, is at the dispose of one common Lord of all, because it belongs to a sphere above sense, is little considered by the most. To you, I doubt not, it is far from being a new or unfamiliar thought; and thereupon, that the precious life you have lately seen finished, was measured by Him who could not therein be unkind to him who is gone; or to you who stay behind.

We do indeed tempt ourselves, if we expect from his kindness unreasonable things: as that he should, to gratify us, alter the course of nature, or recall the universal commission of death, or only let it stand in force with an exception as to ourselves, our relatives, and friends, or that he should tear his own most inviolable constitutions by which the present state is to be but transitory, and the future the only fixed state;—which were to subvert the whole frame of religion, to nullify the design of redemption, to take down his tribunal, to abolish and lay aside all thoughts of a judgment to come, and finally to make the kingdom of his dear Son to terminate in a dunghill. While no such wish hath place with you, your reconciliation is easy to the Providence that hath for the present bereaved you of so delectable a relation. And the love of God, which, prevailing in you, will prompt you to com-

pliance with his will, must be the evidence of your title to the best blessings of both worlds. For both the things in the *other* state, *that* the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, etc., and the concurrent operation of all things for good in this *present* state, do all belong to persons of the same character,—the lovers of God:[1] which that you may constantly and fully experience to the end, and in the end, is the serious prayer for you, of

Your very respectful

And affectionate servant in Christ,

JOHN HOWE.

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9; Rom. viii. 28.

A SERMON

ON THE

MUCH LAMENTED DEATH OF THAT REVEREND AND WORTHY SERVANT OF CHRIST,

MR. RICHARD ADAMS, M.A.

PHILIPPIANS i. 23.

"HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH CHRIST; WHICH IS FAR BETTER." *THE FOREGOING WORDS ARE,* "I AM IN A STRAIT BETWIXT TWO"—*AND THEN IT FOLLOWS,* "HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART," ETC.

If you should have no other subject for your present consideration, than only that one in your neighbourhood is lately dead; even that itself would deserve your very serious thoughts. The translation of human souls from world to world, and out of this present into their eternal state, is no light matter, and does claim and challenge more serious thoughts than it is commonly wont to find and meet with. Nor does the commonness of such an occasion at all excuse the slightness of men's thoughts upon it; but rather aggravate it unspeakably more. That which we find to be so common and universal a case, we may be sure will shortly be our own: and as it is now matter of discourse with us, that such a one is dead, we shall, ere it be long, according as we have been more or less regarded in the world, be a like subject of discourse to others. But it is a greater thing, when it can be said, a good man is gone; there is a more special

remark to be put upon the decease of such a one. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."[1] There is that agreement between his way and his end, they are so much of a piece and do so exactly correspond; a course transacted in a constant serenity and peace, meeting at length with peace as the end of it; an even course, still uniform, self-agreeable, ever equal to and like itself, ending at last in peace:—*mark* this, how he goes off; mark such a life so ending! But it yet challenges more intense consideration, when *such* a one is taken away from amongst us,—and the progress and period of his course come to be viewed together,—whose life was a continued series of labours in the Lord's vineyard from the earlier to the later hours of his day; when such a one has finished his course, and fought out the good fight of faith, and is entered into his rest: by the vouchsafement of his indulgent Lord and Master is made to rest from his labours, and receive the reward of them, the reward of grace, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord!"

And sure it cannot be ungrateful to you, to be desired here to stay a little, to make a stand and pause, and entertain yourselves awhile with the consideration of such a theme and subject as this. Especially it cannot be an ungrateful contemplation to such as have known the doctrine and purpose, and faith and charity and manner of life, of such a one,—as the apostle speaks;[2] so as to be told of nothing, but what you knew before: and so they are not dubious and uncertain thoughts, that you are to employ upon such a theme; you are well assured of the truth of the fact, and when you know it to be true, you cannot but discern it to be very considerable and important truth, and of very great concernment to you. What the spirit of such a one has been through his whole course, you have a very high example of in this blessed apostle; and a copy has been written out fair, after such a pattern, by this lately deceased worthy servant of Christ. Besides the many straits and difficulties that great apostle

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 37. [2] 2 Tim. iii. 10.

met with in the course and current of his time, he meets with this towards the end of it, to be "in a strait between two," and he does not know what to choose; namely, between these two things, the consideration of what would be the best and most valuable good to himself, and the consideration of what would be the more valuable good unto the Christian church; and particularly unto these Christian Philippians, to whom he now writes. He had no doubt at all in the case, but that to depart and to be with Christ would be the best and most valuable good to himself; and it was as little to be doubted of, but that his continued abode and stay in this world would be much more a valuable good unto the Christian church, and unto this or that church in particular, that had enjoyed, and might further enjoy, his most fruitful labours. His difficulty and strait was not either what was best for him, or what was best for them; but which of these two he should upon the whole prefer; whether he should prefer his own private interest, or prefer the common interest of Christ in the world. And upon weighing and pondering the matter with himself, he does prefer the latter, so as, without any kind of hesitation, to express a great complacency in it, that he should be continued yet longer, some time longer, for common good, in this world. And it was a most noble piece of self-denial that was exercised herein, if you consider what the apostle's privileges had been. He had been caught up into the third heaven, he had there seen unutterable things; nor could he doubt his interest in the felicity and glory of the heavenly state. On the other hand, consider; his life here on earth was no voluptuous life, it was not a life of ease and pleasure.[1] And you find amongst how many deaths he conversed, as it were, every day of his life; how familiar labours and fastings and watchings were to him, yea stripes and imprisonment; and that he was now at this time a prisoner, —as we see in some foregoing verses of this very chapter,[2]—

[1] See the account that he gives of it in 1 Cor. iv. and 2 Cor. vi. and in chap. xi. of the same epistle.

[2] Namely, verses 13—16.

even in the very lion's paw, in the continual expectation of being devoured, and not long after to be offered up, as he elsewhere speaks. Yet he seems to take great complacency in the thoughts of having some addition made to his time in this world on the common Christian account; and that his own blessedness and glory should be for this reason a little while deferred; he was patient of this, he could endure it, out of his love to Christ and the souls of men. But as to *himself*,—for what he esteemed and desired accordingly as his best and most valuable good,—he was in no hesitation or doubt concerning that; but pronounces without any more ado, that he did desire to be dissolved, or depart, (the words may be read either way,) and to be with Christ, which is far better; only he distinguishes what was his own most valuable good, and what was the most valuable good of the Christian church. And though he give this latter the preference, as in itself the more considerable thing; yet as to himself and his own concerns, to depart and be with Christ he reckons far better: and accordingly he did desire it as such,—as better for him; as having nothing to detain him, or nothing which, on his own private account, he could so much mind or covet as that.

Now in this comparison, it is this one side of it, which the words that I have read to you do call us to consider, and confine us to at this time. As to that other part, it lies within the compass of the context, but not of the text; and so we shall not treat of that at present: but consider what is the genuine temper and disposition of a Christian, and more principally of a minister of Christ, in reference to what he is to eye and look upon as his own best and most valuable good; and that is, "to depart, and to be with Christ." This indeed the apostle speaks of himself,—a great and eminent minister of the gospel of Christ: but though this temper and disposition of spirit was agreeable, it was not appropriate, to such a one. It is indeed very agreeable, it is very suitable to the spirit of a faithful minister of Christ, in reference to himself and any interest and concern of his, to desire to depart

and to be with Christ: but it is not so agreeable to such a one as to be *appropriate* to him, or to exclude the generality of serious and living Christians; because it is upon one account principally, *common* to ministers and to other Christians, that this judgment is to be made, and this desire is to have place in reference to that judgment. And therefore, that is what I will, for the little time that remains, chiefly insist upon:—That it ought to be, and in very great measure is, the temper and character of gracious persons, or sincere Christians, but principally of the faithful ministers of Christ, with reference to any interest or concern of theirs, to desire to leave this world, and to be with Christ. And in speaking to this, I shall, first, briefly explain what requires to be explained in it; and then, secondly, show you upon what grounds this temper and disposition of mind is agreeable, in the general, to sincere Christians: thirdly, upon what more peculiar grounds it is more especially suitable to the faithful ministers of Christ: and so make use of the whole.

First: As to what requires explication. Here we must show you what the object of this desire is in the first place; and then secondly, show you what this desire, with the judgment unto which it is conformable, imports and carries in it. Then we shall proceed to consider the grounds, both with reference to Christians in general, and the faithful ministers of Christ in special, of their having this as an habitual temper of spirit belonging to them.

I. We are to consider the object, which this disposition of spirit here described, has reference to. And that is twofold, privative, and positive. There is,

1. The privative object that this disposition has reference to; and that is, departing from hence. Their desire is to be gone, not to stay always here; that is, as to any concern of their own. Indeed upon other accounts, abstracted from their own, and more important, there may be considerations that may induce their willingness to stay; but as to their own concerns, the private object of their desire is,—to be dissolved, or to be gone, εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι; they would fain be dissolved:

take that reading, and this is such a one's sense, 'I would fain have my bonds and shackles taken off; I would be loose, not be always confined to a body of sin and death and to a vain and wicked world; for these are the things to which we are united;' or, (take the other reading,) 'that are to be left,' in this departure. To depart, what are we to depart from? Why, the *gravamina;* the most grievous things are, a body of sin and death, and a vain and sinful world. 'When God sees good, I would depart,' says such a one, 'from these irksome grievous things, that, while they detain me, torment me every hour.' And then,

2. There is the positive object, that this disposition has reference to; and that is, to be with Christ. This is a mighty thought, if we had time to stay upon it. It is generally to be considered here, with reference to what state of our Lord Christ this was spoken, and then what it is to be with him in that state.

i. With reference to what state of our Lord Jesus this was spoken, 'I desire to be with Christ.' Christ was not at this time in his state of humiliation; he was not now in the form of a servant; he was not now going to die, and sacrifice himself upon an ignominious cross, as it was mentioned he had done, in the next chapter: "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death." It is not in reference to this state, but what follows, that this is spoken: "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at his name, or in his name, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." It is that state of glory in which he was enthroned, and was receiving the homage of all ranks of creatures, according to their capacities. It is this state that is here referred to.

ii. And then, what it is to be with him in this state,—that we are to consider; and plain it is, it is not to be with him as spectators only, but in some sort as partakers; not barely

as spectators. Indeed to be so, is a most desirable thing to all the lovers of Christ; to behold him upon the throne, invested with glory, the highest glory. But this is not all. Indeed, participation with him is sometimes expressed by beholding:[1] "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." But that 'beholding' is fruitive vision; the vision, not of mere spectation, but fruition, by which we enjoy what we see. And so we are taught to reckon concerning this being with Christ in the state of glory: that "if we be dead with him, we believe that we shall also live with him," by participation of the same glorious, blissful life;[2] if we are "children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" "if we suffer with him, we shall be also glorified together." Glorified, is to be made glorious, to be participants of the same glory with him, and not spectators merely. We are not to be glorified merely by a glory that we are to behold, but which we are to bear; not which we are to be the witnesses of only, but the subjects; whereby we are to be made glorious, in conformity to him and in communion with him. And here, that we may more fully conceive the sense of this being with Christ in the state of perfect felicity and glory, it is requisite we consider these two things: the highest perfection of the *object;* and a suitable perfection of the *subject,* according to its capacity, by which it can converse with and enjoy, what continually rays and is communicated from so glorious and blessed an object. First,

The *object* in highest perfection: when our Lord Jesus Christ, not considered merely as God, but as God-man, is exalted, and made as glorious as glory could any way make him; when he is exalted, by way of remuneration for what he had done, for what he had suffered, for what he had achieved and accomplished by his doing and suffering, and

[1] As in John xvii. 24.

[2] Rom. vi. 8, and viii. 17.

he is now in all that most perfect dignity and glory that belongs to him on that account;—this consideration we are to have of the glorious object. We are to consider the high and most absolute perfection of that Person, the most wonderful one that ever was, and of which neither created nature, nor uncreated, affords the like; that is, such a person, in which all the excellencies of created and uncreated nature did meet or were united; and all that felicity and glory and blessedness, that this Person, according to either nature and both together, doth enjoy. Here is the object wherewith we are to communicate. And then, secondly,—

To be with him, as participants, implies the connoted and consequential perfection of the *subject* in itself; the highest that it is capable of, the perfection of all the powers and faculties belonging to a creature of such a nature: a mind apt to employ itself about things of highest value and excellency, able to comprehend whatsoever is needful and fit to be known of such things; contented not to know what is unfit; a will refined from all terrene tinctures and propensions, enlarged and attempered to the best and highest good: whence must proceed the liveliest and purest desires, the noblest and most grateful perceptions and delights, the pleasantest and most satisfying relishes and fruitions.

For, (the high perfection of the object being supposed,) the subject is the spirit of a just man made perfect,[1] of one arrived out of an imperfect to a perfect state. No supposable allusion in this text needs to exclude the real subjective perfection, which is so proper to such spirits and to such a state as is then finally referred to. The satisfaction itself, which results, cannot but be proportionable,—according to the perfect excellency of the object and the perfected capacity of the subject, a most entire satisfaction. These two, meeting together, the most glorious object and a glorified spirit made capable of conversing with it, and enjoying it to the full,—this makes that "fulness of joy, those pleasures for evermore,

[1] Heb. xii. 23.

that are at God's right hand," or in his power to dispose of, in eternal communication.[1] Thus you have some account of the object, privative and positive,—what is to be left, and whom we are to come to; a sinful, mortal body to be left with a vain and wicked world; and a glorious Lord to be approached, so as to be with him, in actual and complacential and eternal communion; to be with him, not as spectators only, but partakers of that glory wherein he is. Then,

Secondly: We are to consider the temper and disposition itself, of serious Christians, and of the faithful ministers of Christ especially, in reference to this state of the objects. And it is made up of two things,—I. Desire; and—II. Estimation, or judgment; that is the measure of the former, and according whereto that desire is directed.

I. This desire is ἐπιθυμία, intense desire, earnest desire, the fervour of desire. That is, as to myself, and as to any concern of mine, I do most earnestly desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; ἐπιθυμία signifies not less than that. And then,

II. The judgment that is made of the case, unto which this desire is conformable; that is, that to be with Christ is far better, far better! It is a strange emphasis, that is used in the Greek text, to express this; for there are two comparatives, μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, more better; with a mighty surplusage besides in the word conjoined,—πολλῷ. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; which is better, better by much; or incomparably better; better above and beyond all comparison. One comparative would not serve the turn, but he adds another, and then superadds a vast surplusage over and above. This is the judgment of the case, according to which this desire is directed and measured. And now for the reasons of this temper and posture of soul, in reference to this state of the case. There are divers very obvious.

1. That this is most agreeable to the law of our creation, to desire and covet the most perfect state, whereof we are

[1] Psalm xvi. *ult.*

capable. It is an unnatural thing not to do so, not to covet the perfection of that state, that we can finally attain to. Nature, in all creatures, tends to perfection; it is a monstrous disorder in nature, for any creature, if it be capable of choice, to choose a state beneath the highest perfection whereof it is capable. And,

2. It is most suitable to the design of our redemption, whether we consider the privative object, unto which our redemption refers, or the positive. The privative object *is* this world, that we are to forsake and leave, with this flesh that connaturalizes us to this world. Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world."[1] As for his redeemed ones, those for whom he gave himself, he is willing they should be here awhile; but he gave himself for them, that they might not be here always; that he might fetch them out of this horrid abyss of darkness, impurity, and death.

And if you look to the positive object,—our Lord died to bring us to God. "He suffered once, the just for the unjust,"[2] for this purpose. He will never desist, till he have brought us quite home to God: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."[3] He suffered, and those sufferings he underwent were the price of our redemption; and for this, to bring the many sons to glory, that were to be brought. And it becomes him, that made all things by himself, and for himself, to bring about his great and glorious design this way; to make the Captain of our salvation perfect; that is, perfectly master of his design. And we are told,[4] "that the Lamb that was slain," was slain on purpose "that he might redeem us to God by his blood;" that he might be capable of saying at last, I have shed my blood, and it has not been in vain; here I have brought back thy wandering strays to thee, that were separate, that had gone off. He has redeemed

[1] Gal. i. 4. [2] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [3] Heb. ii. 10. [4] Rev. v. 9.

them to God by his blood: they were gone off from God; and he, in this way, fetches them back to God; never reckoning his work finished, till he can say, "Here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

3. This most fully answers the gospel call under which we continually are, as to both the parts of the object, the privative and positive. By the gospel we are called out of the world. This is carried in the very notion of the church, —it consists of a people called out of the world. And that call is not finished till we are quite out: but we must be out in the inclination of our minds to be gone from this world, that we may be with the Lord. And as to the positive part of the gospel call, the final term of it is the eternal glory. "The God of all grace has called us unto his own eternal glory by Christ Jesus."[1]

4. This is most suitable unto the aim and tendency of the new creature, which is indeed the effect of the gospel call; wheresoever it comes to be effectual calling, the new creature is the product. This is the genius of the new creature, to aspire upwards. "They that have received the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves;" groan as under a pressure or burden; to be loosened from this world, from this earth, and from these bodies; and to partake in the glory of the sons of God, manifested in the proper season of their manifestation.[2] And as they that in the work of the new creation, are what they are,—new creatures as being born from heaven,—so they are born *for* it. "Except a man be born ἄνωθεν, from above, he cannot enter into nor see the kingdom of God."[3] He is born for this heavenly state when he is regenerate, when he is made a new creature, that he may be capable of entering into this kingdom: and, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us."[4] There are principles inlaid in the work

[1] 1 Pet. v. 10. [2] Rom. viii. 19, compared with the 23rd.
[3] John iii. 3, 5. [4] 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

of the new creature, which dispose the soul Godward and heavenward. "Hereby they are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."[1] And to suppose that there should be a new creature without such a disposition as this, is to suppose the new creature to be the most unnatural creature under heaven. It must have dispositions in it suitable to its nature, and to that state that it is designed ultimately for; as every other creature is suited to the place and state it is to hold in the creation of God.

THIRDLY: But then as to what is more peculiar to ministers, they have more reason than others for this temper and disposition of spirit, both as they know more, generally, of the difficulties of the world, and should be supposed to know more of the state of the other world, than the generality of other men do. Their toil and labour and travail, while they are here in this world, is like to be more: read at leisure 1 Cor. iv. 9—13, with 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5. They have many more uncomfortable things to exercise them, especially the small success of their labours; that they often do but sow the wind, and sometimes reap the whirlwind, and may be glad to depart on this account. And it is to be supposed too, that they should know more of the other world; for they are more obliged to be daily conversant there; their constant business has a steady direct tendency thitherward: and therefore as this cannot but be the temper of serious Christians, it is to be much more so of the faithful ministers of Christ.

And therefore to draw to a conclusion, and shut up all with some use, we may,

I. Infer from it the greatness of that capacity which belongs to an intelligent immortal spirit, that it is capable of such a state as being glorified with the Lord Jesus Christ in that high exaltation of his; it is a state whereof the human spirit is capable. It is indeed very unapt, very indisposed, till the regenerating work take place, till the Divine Spirit have moulded it to that state; but then in the meantime

[1] As in that Col. i. 12.

there is a capacity, a ground-work, upon which the Divine Spirit does operate, by enlightening the mind, and enlarging the will, and refining and defecating the affections, and implanting celestial principles that do all dispose it heaven-ward. But in the meantime it is a useful reflection for every intelligent spirit, that inhabits mortal flesh, to consider, what do I here? While it is my lot to be yet inhabiting this flesh, am I only to mind the things of the flesh? I am capable of an abode above, with the blessed glorious Lord of all; with him my greater concernments do now lie.[1] And,

II. It further lets us see the wonderful love of God in Christ, that he should design such mean abject creatures as we to such a state; that is, that when we depart and leave this world, we are to be with Christ. O kind design! What admirable love is this, that he will not have his own to be always at a distance and far from him! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."[2] And again further,

III. We may infer hence, that holiness, wherever it comes to have place, does comprehend and include in it divine wisdom, so as to make persons capable of judging right or making a true estimate of things; which are more valuable and which are less. Till the sanctifying work of God's Spirit take place in the minds and hearts of men, they judge like fools; they say, A portion here on earth is better, let us dwell always amidst the darkness and death of this lower world, and let them be with Christ that will. But says a gracious spirit, To be with Christ is far better, incomparably, beyond all comparison better, and therefore let us depart, and be with him, as to any interest and concern of ours. And this being so, it is of the greatest consequence to us imaginable —all of us—to endeavour to get this temper of spirit made habitual to ourselves; for it is a thing of dreadful importance, to find the temper of my mind and soul differ from that of all good Christians that ever were, or ever shall be.

[1] Col. iii. 1, 2.

[2] In that of Col. iii. 4.

It is one thing indeed, to be willing to have the height of our happiness deferred for common good; but it is quite another thing to desire to stay here, because I love this world better, and when the practical judgment of our souls is, I had rather be here; when not any concern for the interest of Christ, or design of doing him service here, does reconcile me to an earthly state; but my own temper and spirit is such, that I cannot endure the thoughts of a remove. And let me insist here a little. When the best are continually going,—and though the worst do not go the same way, they are going hence too, departing from hence,—not to be willing to follow; to have a desire running counter to the stream and course of nature in all, and the current of grace in the best, is very unaccountable, and wherein we should by no means tolerate ourselves. An irrational desire of what we see to be impossible—a desire that fights against necessity, which will be too hard for us, and will overcome at last—as to the term *from* which, an abode here; and an unholy desire, in respect of the term *to* which, namely, not to be with Christ; such a desire we should no more endure in ourselves, than fire in our bosoms. To have such an excellent person gone from amongst us, as is lately gone; but to have no disposition to follow! You loved him well, and you loved to hear him preach of heaven, but you cannot endure the thoughts of going where he is gone! Is this well? The world is dying, and you would live! *Miser est quicunque non vult, mundo secum moriente, mori.*[1] What a wretched miscreant is he, that would be an exception from all mankind, and cannot be content to die, when the whole world is dying with him! And for Christians united with Christ, they are such in whose hearts there is a rooted propension towards him, so as to covet his presence above all things. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come, come, Lord Jesus;"[2] either come and take us to thee, or come and manifest thyself to us. Consider then, how absolutely necessary

[1] Sen. Trag.

[2] Rev. xxii.

it is, if there be this terrene temper of spirit, to get it changed. For,

1. While it remains, it countermines the sum of religion. All Christianity runs counter, in the whole design of it, to this temper of spirit, for it terminates on the other world. But when all our thoughts and designs terminate on this world, what a dismal thing is it; to have a temper and disposition in me, wholly repugnant to the design of the Christian religion, which is but to draw people off from this world, and to fit them for another!

2. It will infer, in the next place, that whenever any die, they must die just after the same manner that wicked men do,—a violent death; be torn away from their earthly station. "He shall pluck him out of his dwelling-place, and root him out of the land of the living," as the psalmist speaks.[1] This is dying a violent death; our hearts do not consent, we cannot go but as we are torn up by the roots, and plucked out of our dwelling-places. This is quite another thing from that, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" and this desiring to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. And it signifies,

3. Our not yet having taken God for our God; for our taking him to be our God, and to be our best good, is the same thing. If God be not our best good, he is not our God: and can we choose to be willing to be at an eternal distance from our best good? It must signify, that the love of God has no place in us,—sincere love, true love to Christ; for it is never true, if it be not supreme. But it is the greatest absurdity imaginable, that I should supremely love one that I desire never to be with or enjoy. I shall only add, with reference to the sad occasion that lies in view before us, that what instances we meet with of this kind should leave their several correspondent effects and impressions upon our spirits, partly of lamentation, and partly of imitation, and partly of peaceful submission and satisfaction in the issue, however grievous it be to us.

i. Of lamentation. It is a much to be lamented thing,

[1] Psalm lii. 5.

when such go, as that reverend and worthy person that is lately gone from amongst you. For this temper of spirit being supposed,—by how much the more there was of the conjunct disposition to have been content to have stayed longer for public good, this speaks so much the more of an excellent spirit; when desires are so fervent after the purity and perfection of the heavenly state, that nothing but sincere devotedness to the interest of God in Christ could make them patient of longer abode on earth. It is a respect to God that either draws or detains them, nothing but what is divine inclines them either way: either the enjoyment of God above or his further service here below. That is an excellent spirit that lies under such influences. And the higher was the excellency of such a man, the greater is the loss of him. The more he desired heaven, within such limits, the greater was his value, and with so much the brighter lustre he shone on earth. There is much of God conspicuous in such a man. And it was not a little of Him that was observable in this worthy person. Such a course as his was; that even course, that peaceful course, wherein was so eminent devotedness to God and benignity towards man, showed his spirit was touched by the one for the other. It could not be but by influence from heaven, that he so steadily tended thitherward himself, and was only willing to stay so long out of it that he might invite and draw on as many as he could with him thither. Hereby he appeared so much the more attempered to the heavenly state and that world where divine love governs,—making a man by how much the more strongly he was attracted himself by it, so much the more desirous to attract others. It is what such a one has about him of God on earth, that makes him a desirable thing to us here; it is not what men have of the earthly spirit, but what they have of the Divine Spirit, that makes them useful, both by their labours and examples, to this world of ours; as was this eminent servant of Christ. It is a great thing, to have one pass so long continued a course as his was, with so equal a temper. It is like I may have

known him longer than many or most of you that were not related.

About fifty years I remember his course; and our conversation was not casual or at a distance, as that of mere colleagues, chosen by others, but as friends inward, and chosen by ourselves. Many a day we have prayed together, conferred and taken sweet counsel together, when he was at once an example and ornament to his college, where he lived respected and beloved of all, but of them most, who most knew him. That constant serenity and equality of mind, that seriousness, that humility, wherein he excelled, rendered him amiable to observers; and therewith that industry and diligence that he used in his younger days, by which he laid up that great stock of learning and useful knowledge, that made him (when Providence called him to the city) a well-instructed scribe, capable and apt to bring out of his treasury things new and old, whereof there is and will be a long extant proof in his judicious and dilucid expositions of the epistles to the Philippians and the Colossians, which was the part he bore in the supplement to that most useful work, the English Annotations on the Bible, by the Rev. Mr. Matthew Poole. In the great city he shone a bright and burning light, till many such lights were in one day put under a bushel. I need not tell you what, or how black, that day was. And then, though he was constrained to desert his station, he did not desert his Master's work; but still he was with God, and God was with him; and you know it, I doubt not, many of you, what it was to live under so truly evangelical a minister; to have doctrine from time to time distilling as the dew, and dropping upon you, such as from which you might perceive how great was his acquaintance with the mysteries of Christ: in reference to those, over whom he had opportunity to watch, it was undoubtedly, if it were not their great fault, their very great advantage.

As to his domestic relations, knowing so much of him, I cannot but so much the more lament their loss: God will, I doubt not, be the bereaved widow's portion; but it ought

with tenderness to be considered, what it was for one person to lose successively two such helps, as this and her former husband were, (who was also in another university my former and most inward friend, that worthy man Mr. Thomas Wadsworth,) both eminent instruments in the church of Christ. And this has been more eminently remarkable concerning him that is lately gone, that the relations of the family to whom he was not naturally related, the branches from another root, yet had that apprehension of his love and care of them, and of their own loss, as to desire this public testimony might from them remain of him,—that he was to them as tender a father as if he had been a natural one: such fathers-in-law are seldom known, and therefore it ought to be mentioned, as that which may signify somewhat towards the embalming of his memory among you. Graces, when diffused, give their pleasant relishes to all that any way partake of them.

What follows was delivered in writing into my hands to be inserted, by a dear relation of his.—His humility and self-denial were eminently conspicuous in his taking upon him the care and charge of so small and poor a people, and continuing with them to the damage of his own estate, though he had considerable offers elsewhere. His meekness, as it was very visible in all his conversation, was singularly showed in his bearing, and passing by, slights and affronts, even from those he had very much obliged; taking off the resentments that his friends had of the injuries of that kind put upon him, by abasing himself, saying, 'I am an unworthy creature, I deserve no better.' His candour every one was certainly made sensible of, who should offer to speak anything reflectingly about any person behind their backs; for he was sure to vindicate or lenify in this case, as far as he could.

When labours, weakness and age had worked out his strength of body, there was never anything appeared so manifestly to trouble him as being necessitated to desist from constant preaching.—And notwithstanding all temporal

discouragements he met with in the course of his ministry, his mind to the very last was to have both his sons brought up to it. During the short time of his last illness, when his head appeared somewhat disordered in other things by the pains that were upon him, it was observable, that he always showed himself sensible in hearing or discoursing about anything religious. Being, among other things, discoursed with by his brother about the discharge of his ministry, he answered, he hoped he had endeavoured to serve God faithfully and sincerely, though he had been an "unprofitable servant." About five hours before his death, he said, 'God is my portion;' and desired those about him to join with him in prayer, wherein he expressed himself very suitably to his case as a dying man; concluding thus, 'Grant that when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, I may be taken to those mansions not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

As his life was calm and serene, so was his dying; for though throughout his sickness he was all along apprehensive of approaching death, there was no ruffle upon his spirit, of which he himself then gave this account, "I know in whom I have believed."

ii. Of Imitation:—and as such strokes, when they come, ought to be lamented, they that by such strokes are taken away, ought to be imitated. The example remains; you have the *idea* left; you know how such a one lived, how he walked, how he conversed with his family, how he conversed with you as he had occasion: that excellent spirit he discovered in all, how much of an imitable example has it given to all those that are capable of imitating and receiving instruction that way!

iii. Of Satisfaction. But it ought also to have the effect of satisfaction in the Divine pleasure. When such a blow as this comes, do not repine; peacefully submit, though it carry smartness and severity with it. You ought to feel it, but yet notwithstanding to receive it with submissive silence; "to be dumb, and not open your mouths," remembering who hath done it, and that it is the disposal of wisdom that cannot err, as

well as of power that cannot be resisted, and of kindness and goodness that has its gratefulness to this departed servant of His. For consider, that notwithstanding his willingness to have stayed longer, if his Lord, whose he was and whom he served, had thought fit; yet this could not but be his habitual sense,—"to desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which was far better." And if Christ be pleased, and he be pleased, why should we be displeased?

This was the will of Christ, declared by His word, as to the thing,[1] "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;" and declared by the event as to the time; and *his* will, both because it was Christ's and because it was best. Who are we that we should oppose our will to so kind a will on Christ's part and so well-pleased a will on his part? or that a dissatisfaction should remain with us as to what there is, with Christ and him, so entire satisfaction?

[1] John xvii. 24.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR THAT EXCELLENT MINISTER OF CHRIST, THE TRULY

REV. WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

WHO DECEASED JULY 14TH, 1699.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE

WILLIAM, DUKE AND EARL OF BEDFORD;

MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK, LORD RUSSEL, BARON RUSSEL OF THORNHAUGH,

LORD LIEUTENANT OF THE COUNTIES OF MIDDLESEX, BEDFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE; KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL.

May it please your Grace,

The peculiar and just respect which your Grace hath long had for the worthy person whose much lamented decease occasioned the following discourse, easily induced me to believe, it would not offend your Grace that your illustrious name is prefixed to it: as it also was the sense of his mournful relict, that it could be no less than your Grace's right, such a memorial should be extant, of the favourable aspects wherewith you have been pleased to honour this her so dear relative. Nor can it be unsuitable to the noble amplitude of your truly great mind, that it should be told the world you knew how to value true worth, wheresoever you found it; not confining your respects to any party, or distinguishing men by any; when, especially, the parties themselves are distinguished by marks, which they who wear them count indifferent, and which therefore, must be understood to make men neither better nor worse. And if they who wear them not, count otherwise,—though they should be mistaken in their judgment, after their having endeavoured to the uttermost to be rightly informed,—their sincerity, accompanied and evidenced by great self-denial, must in the account

of so equal and candid a judge as your Grace far outweigh so light a mistake in so small matters. Such differences will be easily tolerable, where there is that mutual charity as neither to think a different judgment to be bribed with dignities and emoluments, on the one hand, nor to be perverted by humour and affectation of singularity, on the other.

The reverend doctor's great candour and moderation in reference to the things wherein he hath been constrained to differ from many excellent persons, and his remoteness from any disposition to censure them from whom he differed, have been these many years conspicuous to all that knew him: the apprehension having been deeply inwrought into the temper of his mind, that the things wherein only it could be possible for truly good men to differ, must be but trifles in comparison of the much greater things wherein it was impossible for them not to agree. And I no way doubt, but the things for which your Grace most deservedly valued this excellent person, were such as have in them an inherent and immutable goodness; not varying with times, or the changeable posture of secular affairs; but which must be the same in all times: nor appropriate to persons of this or that denomination, but that may be common to persons sincerely good, of any denomination whatsoever. Whereupon, the testimony your Grace hath from time to time given of your value of him, on such an account, must have redounded to yourself; have reflected true honour on your own name; shown your discerning judgment of persons and things; and entitled you to his prayers;—which, I hope, have been available to the drawing down of blessings on yourself and your noble family.

Unto whose must his prayers also be added, for the same purposes, who is with greatest sincerity, and under many obligations,

Your Grace's most obedient,

And most humble servant,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON,

FOR

THAT EXCELLENT MINISTER OF CHRIST, THE TRULY

REV. WILLIAM BATES, D.D.

It is grievous to me to tell you, in whose room and stead I do now stand in this place this day. Nor do I need; you can tell yourselves,—observing the stated courses and alternations held in this lecture,—that if the counsels of heaven had agreed with our desires and hopes on earth, this is the day, this is the hour, wherein you had again seen the face and heard the voice of that excellent servant of Christ, whom we now lament as lost to us, and dead out of our world. Not absolutely dead; for God who is his God for ever and ever, is not "the God of the dead, but of the living." Dying out of this world, he was born into the other. But in that sense wherein he is dead to us and this world of ours, what remains but that we agree to say, 'Let us die with him?' And these are the words which, if God will graciously afford us his help and presence, we may fruitfully entertain ourselves with, upon this sad occasion at this time: you will find them in—

JOHN xi. 16.

"THEN SAID THOMAS, WHICH IS CALLED DIDYMUS, UNTO HIS FELLOW-DISCIPLES, LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

The history to which these words belong, contains so illustrious and instructive an instance of the Redeemer's power over both worlds, and so plainly shows that he could, at his

pleasure, translate men out of the one into the other, as might best serve the proper purposes of his redemption, that it can never be unseasonable to us to consider it, who are always subject to the same power. And it is very especially seasonable at this time, when we have reason enough to reconsider his late use of this power in another kind, less grateful to us, but not less wise or just in itself; not the recalling of one out of the other world into this, but the calling away of one out of this world into the other; the translating of this excellent person from among us, whose longer abode here had been highly desirable, as his removal is most bitterly grievous; and must have been intolerable, were it not that though this is not the same act, it is an act of that same power over lives, which in all its exertions we are always to behold with the same profound, adoring silence, and a disposition of mind to receive instruction from it, whether it be pleasing to us or displeasing. I will make no apology for my recalling your thoughts, so long after, to this sad theme. Our mutual endearedness, his condescending affection to me, and my reverential affection to him, were so generally known to those that knew either of us, that it might be expected I should take some public notice of this severing stroke; and I may suppose my circumstances to be so known, that it is obvious to every one to understand I could do it no sooner.

It will not be unuseful to make some brief reflection upon this miraculous work of our Lord, and thence return to the special subject which I desire your thoughts may be fixed upon, as mine have been. It was the most memorable of all our Lord's works of this kind, yet not mentioned by the other evangelists; lest, as is supposed, it should revive the Jewish malice against Lazarus; who, as Epiphanius tells us, was reported to have lived thirty years after, within which time the others had all written, whereas this evangelist wrote not till after his final decease. It was wrought for the same great end for which all His wonderful works were done and written; generally, "for the glory of God," as is intimated;[1] and par-

[1] John xi. 4.

ticularly, as this evangelist tells us,[1] "That we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name." And though they all had this design, this, towards the end of His course, seems meant for the last and conclusive stroke,—having a brighter and more conspicuous appearance of the Divine glory in it,—for a fuller and more convictive demonstration, that He was the Son of God and the Messiah, as He gave himself out to be. And all things were designed in the aptest subserviency hereto; that once for all, this long disputed point might be put out of all doubt.

For this end it is ordered, that Lazarus should at this time fall sick. Nothing more appeared to human prospect, but that the disease befell him according to the common course of natural causes: but says our Lord, "this sickness is not unto death;" namely, as the final and permanent event or design of it; "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."[2] God's counsels lie deep, not obvious to common view. When such a servant of God is fallen sick, we know not what he intends to bring out of it. His glory may, in his own way and time, so much the more brightly shine forth, though we yet distinctly know not when or how. Upon this account, when our Lord not only heard of Lazarus's sickness, but knew he was dead, He yet defers two days, even though He knew him to have then been at least two days dead before: so that when He now comes to the place, He finds him to have lain four days in the grave.[3] He resolves to give so much the greater scope and advantage to the glory of the Divine power, to display and evidence itself. He defers, till now death and the grave were in full dominion, that His conquest might be the more glorious. He had before raised some from death, none from the grave. The lamenting relatives were now in despair: the thoughts of restitution were quite laid aside. All their hopes were buried with the deceased in the same grave, as may be collected from sundry following verses.

[1] John xx. 30, 31. [2] Chap. xi. 4. [3] Ver. 17.

In the like despair, not long after, were the mournful disciples, concerning their not only deceased but entombed Lord, unto whose surprising resurrection this seems a designed prelude. The bereaved relations and their comforters were now all abandoned to sorrow and drenched in tears. And, with the rest, we are told that "Jesus wept."[1] But why was this? Was it that he knew not his own mind or distrusted his own power? He had given sufficient intimation of his own purpose, and of the foresight he had of the certain, glorious issue of this gloomy dark providence. It is evident therefore for what he wept *not*. It is not so obvious to conclude for what he wept. It is most unworthy of him to suppose his was feigned sorrow, or that he shed hypocritical tears. Nor was this the only instance of his weeping; no, no, "He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief;" and had always in view sufficient cause of real soul-trouble, as this is called:[2] "He groaned in spirit and was troubled." It must be, by the contexture of the evangelical history, near the time of his weeping over Jerusalem, when his soul was filled and taken up with sad and mournful themes.

But who can tell what thoughts lay deep in that large and comprehensive mind? We are sure, though he wept with the rest, that it was not as they wept, nor from the same motives. His thoughts were not as their thoughts, but as far wider and higher as the heavens are than the earth. We have no way to know what his thoughts were; we know what they might be. He saw not Jerusalem only, but all this world, buried in sin and death. He could not, as the second Adam, be the resurrection and the life, as he speaks,[3] without beholding with a compassionate heart the impurities and miseries, wherewith it was deluged by the first. And he had now enough in view to discompose his pure mind, intent upon high and great things; that when his business into this world was to prepare men for another, and when they were fit, to translate them thither, even they that professed to

[1] John xi. 35. [2] Ver. 33. [3] Ver. 25.

believe on him should no more understand him; that his kind and great design should be no more grateful to them, and so slowly enter into their minds and hearts that when they saw one such translation, it should so much displease them, and they so little relish it, as to be all in tears and lamentations thereupon; and thereby discover such an affixedness of heart and spirit to this present world and state of things, as to prefer the enjoyment of a friend on earth before all the glories of the heavenly state;—so might their immoderate weeping some way cause his tears. But when he expressed his trouble by groans and tears, he suppressed the causes of it, and goes on to his present intended work. In order hereto, he commands the grave-stone to be removed; neglecting the objection, "By this time he stinketh." [1]

He observed with a compassionate indulgence the diffidence which he meant speedily to refute. Nor, because we also are too prone to prescribe limits to the Divine power, ought we for his indulgence to be the less severe to ourselves. Forgetting the transcendency of that power, we think this or that strange and scarce possible to be done, because we too lightly consider the equal or greater strangeness of what we see is done. We count things easy, that are by use become familiar to our senses, and apprehend we have the notion of them clear, and how they can come to be as they are; not having examined or inquired whether our apprehensions were right and congruous, or not. Things that have not struck our sense,—making ourselves and even our sense the measure,—we count impossible and unconceivable.

By the course of nature, our sense hath told us, a body so long in the grave must be putrid, and stink. But who settled that course of nature? If we ascend not to the original cause, the fixation of that course is as admirable and unaccountable; if we do, a departure from it is as easy. What can the wisest philosophers conceive of the difference between an offensive smell and a grateful, but the different disposition

[1] John xi. 39.

or texture of the particles of matter in relation to the *sensorium*, or the receptive organ,—when *what* that different disposition is, remains altogether unapprehensible, and what no man can tell? We go away well satisfied concerning what we see happens every day, because we never inquire how things came to be as they are; when what we have not known to come to pass, though not more difficult, we say can never be. Otherwise, we should think it no more admirable, or difficult, to reduce in a moment the parts of matter to such a *situs* as that they should give no offence to the sense of smelling, though before they did; than it was to the same power so to dispose, that in one sort of location they should give that offence, in another they should not, and perhaps in a third, highly gratify and please. Thousands of like instances might be given, but this comes now in our way.

The world is full of miracles; we are compassed about with such, and are such. There is, it is true, a peculiar notion of them, as necessary as they are themselves; signifying not what is done by a greater power, but less usual. As such, the use and need of them only argues the infirmity of our minds, sunk into earth and sense, and grown somnolent; whence they need to be roused by surprising and uncommon things, and brought to consider, that he only, who could fix and settle the so steady course of nature, could alter it and make it forsake its wonted tract: which he must always be supposed to do for some very weighty, important end and reason,—so absolute power being ever in strict connexion with the most perfect wisdom, and therefore claiming to be the more earnestly attended to, and considered the more deeply. To that power that could create a man, it was equally easy to perfume a grave, or to make a new man spring up out of it, in fresh strength, comeliness and vigour; to recompose the disordered parts of a body turning to dust, and refit it for the union and use of the returning soul. This he will not do often, but he saw a just and valuable reason for his doing it at this time.

He was now to give and leave behind him a full conclusive

demonstration, once for all, of his being the Son of God, by whom the worlds were made, and the Christ or Messiah,—the great controverted point of that time; which is called "glorifying the Son;"[1] who for asserting this, was calumniated as an impostor and deceiver of the people. He was to give a specimen of his power, as such, over universal nature, and that he could at pleasure control and countermand the most established laws of it; all things being put,—under that notion, as he was the Christ,—into his hands, and "all power given him both in heaven and earth," so as that by him all things must consist;[2] a power he was to use,—being gradually, and at last perfectly, to make all things new.[3] He was to make good his own title, "I am the resurrection and the life,"[4]—which he assumes in this context,—to let it be seen he was no vain pretender; and that it was no vain faith that should be placed upon him in this respect, but that what he should now do, as to one, he was equally able to do in the fit season, for every one, "when all that are in their graves should hear his voice."[5] He was to show forth a resemblance of that more peculiar act of his most graciously undertaken office, to be a spring of life to souls morally dead; namely, in trespasses and sins;[6] to give this divine and most noble kind of life; to do that most merciful and most God-like work! He was to take away all cause or pretence for despair, but that, whereas a death was to pass upon himself and upon his church on earth, both he himself, and it, with his dead body, should arise.[7] Therefore he utters that mighty commanding voice, at which rocks and mountains tremble and shiver, and which all the powers of nature must obey: "Lazarus, come forth!" and he comes forth. These things we now lightly touch, hoping they may be of further use to us afterwards.[8]

[1] John xi. 4. [2] John xiii. 3; Matt. xxviii. 18; Col. i. 17.
[3] Rev. xxi. 5. [4] John xi. 25. [5] Chap. v. 28. [6] Eph. ii. 1.
[7] Isaiah xxvi. 19. [8] Where Lazarus's soul had been in the mean time, was too light a matter to weigh against these mighty things our Lord was intent upon. His concerns were to yield and bow to his Lord and Master's great designs: he could not be unfitter for his own business afterwards, than this apostle in the like case (for ought that he himself knew) was

We expect not the like thing in our present mournful case; but we expect greater things,—for which we are to await our Lord's season.

In the mean time let us return, and consider what is overtured in the case the text refers to, when, as to any such remedy, the mourning friends expected as little as we. Here was a worthy good man gone; a friend of Christ, and of His friends. Christianity gives no man a terrestrial immortality; Christians, even the best of them, must die as well as other men. This was a matter taken to heart by Christ himself, as we have seen, in a way becoming and worthy of him. His disciples also are deeply concerned, and they consider and discourse it their way. One of them, Thomas, who also was called Didymus, (wherein is no other mystery, than that his name is first given us in Hebrew, then in Greek, as is not unexampled elsewhere,) proposes, as you have heard; "Let us also go, that we may die with him." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." There was, no doubt, an abounding fulness of sense in this good man's soul, from whence these words did proceed: and it might be two-fold; either—I. Good and commendable, fit for our imitation, and whereto the temper of our spirits should be conformed. Or, II. Faulty and reprehensible; such as against which we should arm and fortify ourselves.—Such mixtures are not to be thought strange. It is little to be expected that in what is hastily said by the best on earth, on an occasion apt to stir passions, there should be nothing but pure breathings of heavenly wisdom and goodness.

I. Under the former head we shall speak of divers things, which we cannot indeed be sure were the explicit, distinct sense of this good man, at this time; but which might be and should be ours, on a like occasion; which well agree with Christian principles, and which his words serve aptly enough to express: as,

for his. The consideration of this matter did not divert our Lord Christ from what he was intent upon; nor let it divert us, but, as a lighter matter, be left for the exercise of lighter minds.

1. A firm belief of a future state. Did this good man only desire to partake with the other in death, and no more? Did his wish terminate here? Can we apprehend anything good or desirable in mere death, that one would covet to share in with another? or which one would be loath he should engross alone? Nor could Thomas mean this, having heard that Lazarus was already dead. It cannot be thought, that one who had been some years in immediate attendance upon the Son of God, the Lord from heaven, and under His instructions; and who had so much opportunity to observe that His whole design lay for another world; and that He never encouraged His followers to expect from Him any advantages above others, in this world, but forewarned them of troubles and sufferings, to which they would be always liable from it, and that they must be content to wait for their rewards in another state;—it is not to be thought that such a one was an infidel in reference to any such state; or that he thought his friend extinct by dying; or that when he wished to be with him, he wished to be nowhere, or nothing.

2. A mind loose and disengaged from this present world. He could be intent upon no great designs for this earth, who, with the next that leaves it, was willing to go too.

3. Easy, placid thoughts of dying. He looked upon death as no such frightful thing, that could so familiarly and off-hand say, when he thought of such a one's dying; 'Come, let us go and die with him.'

4. A distinguishing judgment concerning the states of men hereafter, remote from thinking it fares with all alike in the other world; but well informed, that it could only be ill with ill men, and well only with the good; a settled persuasion of a judgment to come; according to the declared rules of which judgment, this present judgment is formed,—that they who continue in a course of well-doing, shall have "eternal life;" evil-doers, "indignation and wrath."[1]—This wish could not be thought less cautious than his, who says, with

[1] Rom. ii. 7, 8.

distinction, "Let me die the death of the righteous."[1]—It must be far from him to be content, "God should gather his soul with sinners."[2] The future state was, no doubt, considered as a state of separation between men and men. He could not covet to be associated with good and bad, promiscuously and at random.

5. A rationally charitable opinion and estimate, that he was sincerely good and happy, with whom he coveted to be united in death. Such an opinion is all that is here requisite. Faith it cannot be, for the object is not a revealed thing. Knowledge it is not, for we have no medium to know it by. That we have more reason to think this than the contrary, of such a one, is sufficient; and that this should be implied in this wish, is necessary. Here was an apprehension of a happy state the other was passed into. That saying, *Sit anima mea cum philosophis*, implied that he who said it, thought their state better than some other men's. And Thomas could not but have sufficient reason for his apprehension of Lazarus's sincerity, so as not to doubt of his felicity. His house, he observed, was our Lord's resort: here He was received gladly by him and his good sisters. His doctrine, we have cause to think, he entertained as well as Himself, and Himself for His doctrine's sake. The peculiar affection our Lord had for him,—observed by the domestics, that say, "He whom thou lovest is sick,"[3] noted by the Jews, with a "Behold how He loved him,"[4]—could leave Thomas no ground of doubt but he was a sincere believer on the Son of God, and now in a blessed state: so are Christians, visibly such, to esteem of one another, and accordingly to have communion with one another in grace, and hope and wish for it in glory; a temper now, very alien from too many that go under that name,—who make not the great substantials of Christianity the measure of their present and hoped communion, but devised additions of their own: or rather, not what they add to, but substitute in the stead of, faith, mercy and the love of

[1] Numb. xxiii. 10. [2] Psalm xxvi. 9. [3] John xi. 3. [4] Ver. 36.

God; and license themselves to ascend the throne, usurp the seat of judgment, and boldly damn all them who are not of their own complexion and party, and that cannot so far conform to their humours, passions, prejudices and interested inclinations, as to say and act in everything just as they do.

6. A most ardent and most generous love to such good men upon that just and reasonable apprehension of them. For what love can be greater? How can one more highly express love to any man, than by a declared willingness to live and die with him; and simply to die, when he can no longer live with him? Love raised to this pitch is stronger than death. Heathen story is not without such instances of some, whom no dread of death could sever from each other; but that they have been willing, as the case should require, to die with, or to die for, another; to be either each other's companions or substitutes in death. The tyrant Dionysius having sentenced to death one of that admirable pair, Damon and Pythias, and fixed the day of execution, the condemned person petitioned for leave to be absent upon important occasions,—in that interval his friend offering himself, as his sponsor, to die for him, if he returned not by the appointed day. He returning punctually with all diligence, knowing his friend's life to be otherwise in hazard; the tyrant, in great admiration of their mutual love and fidelity, pardons the condemned, and requests of them both, that they would admit him, as a third person, into the society of their friendship.[1]

What they tell us of divers others I mention not, whom no death could sever, whom dangers did more closely unite. Such as are conjoined in the same common cause,—their mutual love mutually animates them even to face death; because each finds the other will not flinch, or leave him in danger alone. Many waxed bold by the apostle's bonds,[2] when they could not but be thought bonds of death; no doubt, because he was dear to them: so that they were

[1] Related by Cicero, *de Offic.* lib. 3, and divers others. [2] Phil. i. 14.

willing even to run into the same bonds, because he was bound by them. Even in this sense love casts out fear. And what could more, either express his own love or tend to inflame other men's, than when that great apostle bespeaks the Christians of that time,—as having his life bound up in theirs,—"I live if ye stand fast?"[1] that he was ready to impart, with the gospel, "even his own soul to them, because they were dear to him,"[2] "and that they were in his heart to live and die with them?"[3] There seemed to be but one life common to him and them? When there are such unions, that each is to the other an *alter ego,* another self, and another's soul is to a man as half his own, as he[4] pathetically phrases it; here is the height of affection! And that affection mutually heightens each other's courage, and is a continual and reciprocated source of a generous magnanimity springing from the one into the other's breast, while they perceive in one another a mutual vying, who shall the more adventurously rush upon death for, or in conjunction with, the other.

This seems not alien from the temper of Thomas's mind in his uttering of these words. For when our Lord proposed going into Judea,—other of the disciples objecting that the Jews had there lately sought to kill Him,—he, when he understood Lazarus was dead, whom he knew to be a friend to that cause, though he died not for it; 'Come,' says he, 'let us now fear no death, let us rush, *in media arma,* throw ourselves into the midst of death, and there breathe forth our souls, full of love to God and Christ and him and one another; even upon the same spot where this friend of our Lord and our common cause and interest, breathed forth his.' These noble principles, fortitude and love, might have made two distinct heads of discourse; but they are so complicated and interwoven with one another, that they were scarce to be considered apart. And this complication, these words more than intimate:—"That their hearts may be comforted," (or

[1] 1 Thess. iii. 8. [2] Chap. ii. 8. [3] 2 Cor. vii. 3. [4] Hor.

incited, and stirred up, as the word there used signifies,) "being knit together in love."[1]

7. A lively apprehension of the large, abounding diffusion of the Divine fulness: sufficiently able to replenish and satisfy all that shall be prepared to partake in it. That this good man's eye was upon somewhat else than mere death, and that he coveted not to die for dying's sake, must be out of doubt with us. He certainly aimed at a blessed state after death. And who can suppose his mind void of that so common notion, that the blessedness of souls must lie in God? But this could not be all. The faint, spiritless notion of a felicity to be enjoyed in God, could signify little to the present purpose. Here must be a lively, gustful apprehension of it too; for here is intervening death to be gone through. And he expresses himself willing to attempt this difficult pass: "Let us go—that we may die." How few do you know or converse with, that are without this notion, that God is the blessedness of souls! or that assent not to it as soon as they hear it! Yet how few do you know, that are willing to die to enjoy him! No, no; they are generally willing, rather to eat the dust of the earth and feed upon ashes thousands of years, than go to God for a better portion! Notwithstanding their dead, spiritless, inefficacious notion of a divine heavenly felicity, they had rather want it. A blessedness not to be had on earth, or that must come by dying,—they bless themselves from such a blessedness! It is plain then there must be more than a dead notion to overcome their aversion to dying. And what can that be more? It is as plain, it must be a vivid apprehension of such a blessedness in God after death. And that imports two things.

i. A divine faith of it. It must be the apprehension of faith, and of a divine faith. Almost every one pretends to believe it, but it is generally with a human faith only; because their parents, or preachers, or the common voice of the country, hath told them so. A divine faith is full of

[1] Col. ii. 2.

divine life and vigour, the substance and evidence of what is believed,—the soul being overpowered into this belief by the majesty and authority of the great God revealing it, and the awfulness of his testimony. The word of God revealing this, as other portions of sacred truth, works effectually in them that so believe it; that is, that receive it "not as the word of man, but as the word of God."[1] They "that live in the hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised,"[2] would break through a thousand deaths to obtain it. This is more than a spiritless notion. And,

ii. Such a lively apprehension hath in it somewhat of a present sense and foretaste of that blessedness; a heaven begun,—which is of the same kind with their future heaven. They have "the kingdom of God within them, which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."[3] Such an earnest speaks their own right, while they are yet sensible of the great imperfection of their present state. They are therefore willing to die, that they may be made perfect. They now know by taste what it is to enjoy God. "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"[4]—A mere notion informs us not enough, so as to actuate our minds what that means. Notwithstanding it, the carnal mind can frame no distinct heart-moving thought of felicity, other or more grateful, than the relishes of meat and drink, or the satisfaction of some or other mean or carnalized appetite. They that have tasted somewhat of a higher kind, long for more; and most of all, that most perfect fruition which they must pass through death to attain.

We will not suppose this good man to have been destitute of such a faith, and of such tastes of the heavenly felicity. And as hereby he was not without a lively apprehension of the kind and nature of it, so we must suppose him to have a like apprehension of the large, copious, abounding, and diffusive fulness of it, whereof his words give some intimation: "Let us go, and die with him." He doubted not of a suffi-

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 13.
[2] Tit. i. 2.
[3] Rom. xiv. 17.
[4] Ps. xxxiv. 8.

ciently extensive communion in this blessedness; as much as to say, 'There is enough for him and us all.' And such apprehensions we all ought to have of the blessedness of the heavenly state into which we are to be intromitted by death,—that it is enough for all that can be in any possibility to partake in it; so that the abounding plenitude of no one's portion can be any diminution to another's. The kind and nature of material, sensible good, hath a remarkable and most agreeable affinity to what is said, (and what, upon very strict inquiry, one knows not how not to say,) of matter itself,—that it is perpetually divisible; but so, as that every part and particle is still less and less. Whereupon it cannot but be that whatsoever any enjoy of terrene good, so much is detracted from the rest. Of intellectual, spiritual good, knowledge, wisdom, grace, glory, the case is quite different. Let any possess never so much, it nothing diminishes another's possession in the same kind. If another man be never so wise, good, or happy, it takes nothing from me; I may be as wise, good and happy. At least, that hinders not but I may.

How pleasant a contemplation is this; that in the vast and numberless regions of light, bliss, and glory, the blessed inhabitants are all drawing from the same fountain; solacing themselves in that fulness of joy, drinking in from those rivers of pleasure that flow from the Divine presence for evermore! All deriving, unto satiety, from "that fulness that filleth all in all."

8. Preference of the society with holy ones in the heavenly state, above any to be enjoyed on earth. The words, as to their most obvious sense, seem to be full of this: 'With whom I would live, with him I would die.' Is not this our common sense? Not that we can apprehend anything in the very act or article of dying, that can make dying with one more desirable than with another; but it must be meant of what is to follow. We would not have death to part us. We would enjoy one another after death, but so as we did not before. It is very probable our Lord and his disciples had.

formerly enjoyed pleasant hours with Lazarus in his own house. But why doth Thomas, therefore, desire they might die to be with him? Excepting him, he might still have enjoyed the same society on earth, and of many other Christian friends besides. But we see his proposal concerned not himself only. It is, "Let us go die with him." He reckoned they should all die, and be with him together; and that the state they should then be in, would have, in point of society and conversation, such advantages above what their present state afforded, as were worth dying for.

And how can we but apprehend the vast difference? Whatever delight good men on earth have had in one another's society, they must then be better company than ever. How hard is it now to communicate our sentiments! We know not what our ways of converse shall hereafter be, but we know that such words as we now use are very slow defective media of conveying our minds and sense to one another. What a difficulty do we now find, if we apprehend a thing clearly ourselves, to make another master of our notion! What circumlocutions do we need, what explications, to make another understand our meaning! And then those explications need further explication, and so we run ourselves into new difficulties and entangle one another more and more. Most of our controversies arise from our mistaking one another's sense, though too often those mistakes are wilful with them who love strife more than truth; and it is industriously endeavoured to pervert each other's words, and put senses upon them quite besides, or against, our true intent. But if we speak and hear with the greatest candour and sincerity that is possible, we are frequently not understood aright; either through the unskilfulness of him that speaks, to choose the aptest words and forms of speech, or unattentiveness, incapacity and dulness, in them that hear; frequently from both together. Hence is the conversation of Christians so little edifying, though they discourse of useful subjects, which, God knows, there is little of amongst us; though much *of this evil* more than is commonly apprehended,

proceeds from want of love, that should let us into one another's minds and hearts.

Our very sermons, when we study to make important things as plain as we can, are lost upon the most; though here we see the advantage of a people's having a love to their minister, which is a mighty orator within themselves and will make them endeavour to take in his heart and soul: as on his part, his love to them will make him willing,—as we heard from the apostle,—to impart, with the Gospel, his own soul.[1] But as to Christian converse in this our present state, besides the difficulty of understanding one another, all, even of them who have great treasures of knowledge in them, are not alike conversable and communicative; nor any at all times. The dearest friends often find one another indisposed, otherwise busy, morose, sour and out of humour; apt to take and perhaps to give offence, on one hand and the other. And whereas we should most intimately converse with ourselves,—upon the mentioned accounts, we are now very often the worst company that can be to ourselves, through the darkness, confusion, intricacy and incoherence of our own thoughts, the fervour and tumultuation of ill affections, and the sluggishness and drowsy torpor of good. And in what case are we to please others by our converse, that have so much cause to be always in a very great degree displeased with ourselves?

When death shall have disencumbered and set us free from all sorts of distempers, and brought us into the state of perfect and perfected spirits, how delectable will that society be, when all shall be full of divine light, life, love, and joy; and freely communicate, as they have received freely! How pleasant will it be, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God! to converse with angels! those wise, kind creatures, so full of profound knowledge and benignity; instructed by long, uninterrupted experience and observation of the methods of the Divine government and dispensation; highly pleased with our accession to the general

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 8.

assembly; that rejoiced in the conversion of a sinner, whereby but one was hereafter in due time to be added, much more in the glorification of so many that are now actually added, to them! What delightful communings will there be of the mysteries of nature! of the methods of providence! of the wonders of grace! of the deep and hidden counsels of God, in what part it shall be agreeable to his wisdom and good pleasure to let them appear and stand in view!

The conferences at the transfiguration made the transported disciples say, "It is good to be here," when the glory which, while it oppressed, pleased them; though this was but a transient view. But above all that is conceivable in that other state, how delectable will their society be in worship; in their unanimous adoration of the ever-blessed God, Father, Son, and Spirit! In how pleasant eternal raptures of delight and praise will all those excellent creatures be, that inhabit and replenish the vast realms of light and bliss; when all behold how the several kinds of being, light, life, excellency and perfection, by a perpetual efflux, spring from the First, the Fountain of all being, the Parent of so glorious and so numerous a progeny, all God-like, and bearing the bright image of their Father! O the inexpressible pleasure of this consociation in worship, perpetually tendered with so absolute a plenitude of satisfaction in the dueness of it; and the gustful apprehension of what those words import, "Worthy art thou, O Lord!" each one relishing his own act with just self-approbation and high delight, heightened by their apprehended perfect unanimity, and that there is among them no dissenting vote. Whence it cannot be but to "worship God in spirit and truth," must be to enjoy him; and that he is under no other notion, the satisfying object of our enjoyment, than as he is the object of our worship. What room or pretence is there now left for unwillingness to die, on the account of relatives we have been wont to converse with in this world, when such an exchange as this is to be made by dying! But,—

II. We are also to consider, There might be an inter-

mixture in the temper of this good man's spirit, when he uttered these words, of somewhat faulty and blamable; which we are to be cautioned against.

1. There might be too little consideration had of the dignity and value of human life; of which the great God takes so particular care, to guard and sustain it, both by law and providence; and of this creature man, so noble a part of divine workmanship, and whom he set over all the works of his hands, in this lower world. To propound throwing away at once so many such lives, seems somewhat too precipitant.

2. The words seem not to savour enough of that deference which is due to the God of our lives; whose prerogative it is to kill and to make alive; to measure our time, and number our days. It might have been said, at least, "If God will," etc.

3. There might be in them too little gratitude for the mercies of life, or patience of the difficulties of it; somewhat like that of Jonah, "Take now, I beseech thee, my life from me."

4. Too little regard to the business of life. It might have been more at leisure considered, 'Is the business done I was born for?' Their special business, who were to be the apostles of our Lord,—already called,[1] and instructed in great part of the work of their calling,—was apparently too little considered; especially how or for what his Lord was to die Himself, so far as either from His own words or from the prophets, might have been collected.

5. Nor perhaps enough, how awful a thing it was to die, to change states and pass into eternity! This might, upon this account, be too hastily said. Good old Simeon seemed to have considered the matter more, when he said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," etc.

6. And there is reason to apprehend, in these words, too much displicency at the providence of God in taking away

[1] Matt. x. 1, etc.

such a man now at such a time; with some appearance of despondency concerning the Christian interest. This Lazarus is thought to have been a wealthy man, though *he* in the Parable is represented otherwise. Christianity was as yet, a little thing in the world. Our Lord had signalized himself by his wonderful works, and drawn many eyes upon him, that were at a gaze; but his heavenly doctrine and the true design of his coming had entered into the minds of but a few, and they of the meaner sort. Had any of the rulers believed on him? It was yet a dubious twilight, and the dawning of the morning. "The Spirit" that was to convince the world, "was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified."[1] Nicodemus, a rabbi, came to him,—but by night. This cause, (as still, according to human estimate,) depended much on reputation. Men loved—till an overpowering influence bore down all before it—"the praise of men more than the praise of God;"[2] and "believed not, because they sought honour one of another."[3]

It was now, a mighty loss to have one such man drop, that lived so near Jerusalem, where our Lord's great work did much lie, but where he chose not to lodge: this was in Bethany, but two miles off, a convenient retreat. The master of the house is himself dislodged; and whereas, though "the foxes had holes and the birds of the air nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head;"[4] this disciple might probably think, Where shall be our next resort? Where is there a considerable person to be found, that will hereafter give us harbour and countenance? He might hence be induced even to utter his *conclamatum est;* and to this purpose say, now he is dead, 'Let us all go die with him.' Their Lord and Master had before told them of his being ere long to be taken from them; and that his followers must count upon taking up their cross daily. 'And what,' might he think, 'is to become of us, upon whom, left desolate, the stress is to lie

[1] John vii. 39; chap. xvi. 8.
[2] Chap. xii. 43.
[3] Chap. v. 44.
[4] Luke ix. 58.

of the Christian cause? What storms will be raised against us, whose province it must be to plant and propagate a new religion in the world,—the tenderest concern in all the world, and about which men are most apt to be enraged at any attempt of innovation; and *especially* by us, unlearned, uninterested, obscure and contemptible men!' By what he here says, he seems not afraid to die; but he seems afraid to live and face the storm and contend with the difficulties of that even hopeless undertaking, which he perceived himself and his companions designed unto: rather than this, he seems to apprehend a present death was to be chosen.

And I now no way doubt, but any serious person that shall be at the pains to commune with himself, will judge there may be such quick turns of thoughts this way; and that,—as those opposite senses of this passage do import,—the variety and contrariety of principles that are in us in this imperfect state, makes it no impossible thing, but that, amidst the various agitations of a musing mind, somewhat of grace and somewhat of sin, yea much of a holy and heavenly temper, with some degree of incogitancy, haste, and faulty distemper, might be vented together in such an expression.

And now for the use of it, we must have distinct respect to both these sorts of sense, which the words may admit of. And,

1. For whatsoever of good sense they have in them, let us endeavour to have it deeply impressed, and inwrought into our souls. So far as, upon good and self-justifying accounts, one may wish to die with another eminently holy and good, let us labour to be in that temper of spirit, that with all reverential submission to the wise, holy, and sovereign will of God, we may ever be ready to go with the first: a good man should need only leave to die. Consider; are we so loose from all worldly enjoyments and designs, as to be capable, when a holy man dies, of adopting these words, 'Let me die with him?' Will they fit our spirits? Can we so far comport with them as to avow it with a heart not reproaching us, that it is only obedience to the Supreme Ruler, not

terrene inclination, that makes us willing to survive such as we see going off this stage before us? that if he, in whose hands our breath is, will have us still live, we can submit with patience; if he signify his mind we shall die, we can comply with gladness?

But, do we find it otherwise? Doth the bent of our own spirits urge and press us downward, and fix us to the earth? Are we so within its magnetism? We have a worse evil to fear than bodily death. To be so "carnally minded is death," in a far more horrid sense. This temper of mind, to prefer an earthly abode before the purity and bliss of the heavenly society, is so repugnant to the most constituent principles of a living Christian, his faith of the unseen world, his delight in God, his love of the Divine presence, and converse with the Father and Son in glory, his hatred of sin, and desire of perfect holiness, that he should rather take another name, than wear that of a Christian in conjunction with the allowance of so unchristian a spirit; a temper that tends to subvert whole Christianity, and puts a man into a posture of hostility against the cross of Christ, and the very design of his dying. For in contradistinction to them "whose conversation is in heaven, and from whence they look for the Saviour," are they become the declared "enemies of his cross, who mind earthly things;"[1] preferring an earthly before the heavenly state. And the apostle tells such, weeping as he wrote, that "their end will be destruction." This I must therefore say and testify in the Lord, that if any will indulge themselves in such a temper of spirit, and—whosoever goes, even of the most excellent of God's saints and ministers—*they* would (because they love the present world more) stay with the last; as to such, our preaching is vain, and their faith is vain. But if there have been any within the compass of your knowledge and acquaintance, of whom dying, or lately dead, you could say, 'Let me die with him, or die to be with him,' of whom would you rather say it, than of the excellent Dr. Bates?

[1] Phil. iii. 18—20.

But do you expect I should give you a distinct and full account of him? Many of you know, or may easily apprehend, I have not been in circumstances by which it could be so much as possible to me. The surprising, overwhelming tidings of his death, with the signification of my being expected to do this part, first reached me, by just estimate, at about two hundred miles' distance. Nor did anything to that purpose, from such as were concerned, come to my hands till a fortnight after his decease. At my return, towards the end of the week preceding this sad solemnity, I had my own charge, from which I had been long absent, to provide for against the Lord's day; after which only one day intervened, wherein thoughts that accompanied me in my way were to be reduced into some order. But had I had never so much time and leisure, I cannot but reflect on what was said of that famous Roman, 'To give the just praises of Cicero,' *Cicerone laudatore opus fuerit*:[1] 'there was need of Cicero himself to be the encomiast.' No man knows how to speak becomingly of the excellencies of Dr. Bates, that hath not the eloquence of Dr. Bates. He did that office most laudably for divers others; for those reverend and truly great men, Dr. Manton, Mr. Clarkson, Dr. Jacomb, and the admirable Mr. Baxter. But now there is no man left to do it suitably for him; that is, that both is fit and willing. So that this part comes to be devolved upon the unfittest among many.

Yet thus, while others have declined it, out of a modest opinion of its being above them, whose abilities and conveniencies for the performance did much more concur; this looks like an art and contrivance of Providence, to greaten him the more, that every one reckons him too great for their commendation: and that consequently, he is to pass out of our world as one too big for our praises, with no encomium, or that which is next to none.

Though I first had the opportunity and great pleasure of his acquaintance above forty years ago, yet I have no present

[1] Livius.

way while I am writing this, of knowing or recollecting with certainty anything of the earlier days of his life. As therefore the case is, the little I shall say of him, shall be, not by way of history, but of character. Nor in giving somewhat of that, can one well omit—

First, To take notice of, what must with every one come first in view; namely, his self-recommending aspect, composed of gravity and pleasantness, with the graceful mien and comeliness of his person. That was said upon no slight consideration of the nature of man, from unbribed common estimate, that whatever a man's virtuous endowment be, it is the more taking and acceptable as coming *e pulchro corpore*, 'from a handsome, well-framed body.' God had designed him to circumstances and a station not obscure in the world, and had accordingly formed him with advantage; so that his exterior and first aspectable part, might draw respect. And though the treasure to be lodged there, was to be put into an earthen vessel, yet even that was wrought *meliore luto*, of finer or more accurately figured and better turned clay. He was to stand before kings;[1] you know in what relation he stood to one, as long as was convenient for some purposes; and how frequent occasion he had of appearing (never unacceptably) before another. His concern lay not only with mean men,[2] though he could tell also how to condescend to the meanest. His aspect and deportment was not austere, but both decently grave and amiable, such as might command at once both reverence and love; and was herein not a lying, but the true picture of his mind.

I may to this purpose borrow his own words,—and whose could I more rightfully borrow, or to so much advantage?—concerning that excellent person, Alderman Ashurst, whose fragrant memory will long survive the age he lived in. And, Oh that his example might govern London as long as his name lasts! Of him the Doctor says,[3] 'A constant serenity reigned in his countenance, the visible sign of the divine

[1] Prov. xxii. 29. [2] Ibid.

[3] Epistle to the Funeral Sermon for Mr. Benjamin Ashurst, dedicated to Sir Henry.

calm in his breast; the peace of God that passes all understanding!' And who could have said this but Doctor Bates? or so appositely have applied what had a higher author? So expressively, so fully, so truly and justly, was it spoken! But also, of whom could this have been more fitly said, than, *mutato nomine*, of Dr. Bates? How rarely should we see a countenance so constant and so faithful an index of an undisturbed, composed mind! Through that, if we looked into this, how rich furniture of the inner man should we soon perceive and admire!

His natural endowments and abilities appeared to every observer great,—much beyond the common rate; his apprehension quick and clear; his reasoning faculty acute, prompt and expert,—so as readily and aptly to produce, and urge closely, the stronger and more pregnant arguments, when he was to use them; and soon to discern the strength of arguments, if he was to answer them: his judgment penetrating and solid, stable and firm; his wit never vain or light, but most facetious and pleasant, by the ministry of a fancy both very vigorous and lively, and most obedient to his reason; always remote both from meanness and enormity. His memory was admirable, and never failed, that any one could observe; not impaired by his great age of seventy-four: insomuch, that speeches made upon solemn occasions, of no inelegant composition (some whereof the world hath seen, though extorted from him with great difficulty and by much importunity) he could afterwards repeat to a word, when he had not penned one word of them before. And his sermons, wherein nothing could be more remote from ramble, he constantly delivered from his memory; and hath sometime told me, with an amicable freedom, that he partly did it to teach some that were younger, to preach without notes. His learning, and acquired knowledge of things, usually reckoned to lie within that compass, was a vast treasure. He had lived a long, studious life; an earnest gatherer, and (as the phrase is)[1] devourer of books: with which he had so great an

[1] Helluo.

acquaintance, and they that were acquainted with him so well knew it, that one, who was, for the dignity of his station and the eminency of his endowments, as great a pillar and as excellent an ornament of the church as any it hath had for many an age, hath been known to say, that were he to collect a library, he would as soon consult Doctor Bates as any man he knew. He was, indeed, himself a living one.

He knew how to choose, and was curious in his choice. Whatsoever belonged to the finer and more polite sort of literature was most grateful to him, when it fell into a conjunction with what was also most useful. Nothing mean was welcome into his library or detained there, much less thought fit to be entertained and laid up in the more private repository of his mind. To speak of the particular parts of his learning wherein he excelled, were to trifle, when there are so many visible effects extant, that enough inform the world. His divine knowledge, and the abundant grace of God in him, have been eminently conspicuous the same way in great part; but otherwise also. For his private conversation was so instructive, so quickening, in reference to what lay within the confines of religion and godliness, that no man of ordinary capacity could hear his usual and most familiar discourses, but either with great negligence or great advantage.

When he hath been to consider a case of conscience, I have sometimes had opportunity to observe with what wisdom, what caution, what tenderness, he hath spoken to it, and with what compass of thought; turning it round this way and that; most strictly regarding our sacred rule, and weighing all circumstances that concerned the case: but withal, taking occasion from thence (when the persons concerned have not been present) to magnify and adore the grace of God—which he would do most pathetically, and with great affection—for keeping us out of the way of temptation, which he thought was too little considered by Christians; and thereby saving us from the entanglements and perplexities of spirit, as well as from the scandals, that befel

many. I never knew any, more frequent and affectionate in the admiration of divine grace upon all occasions, than he was; or who had a deeper sense of the impotency and pravity of human nature.

His discourses were usually (as our rule directs) savoury, as seasoned with salt, and such as might minister grace to the hearers. He was frequently visited by persons of higher rank, and that made no mean figure in the world: of whom, some have acknowledged, that, going abroad upon hazardous employments, they have received from him such wise and pious counsels as have stuck by them, and they have been the better for afterwards. Though in his communing with the many friends whom he irresistibly constrained to covet his most desirable society, he did not exclude the things that were of common human concernment, he still discovered a temper of mind most intent upon divine things. He did not look with a slight or careless eye upon the affairs of the public, but consider and speak of them as a man of prospect and large thought, with much prudence and temper; not curiously prying into the *arcana* of government or reasons of state, which it was necessary should be under a veil; much less rudely censuring what it was not fit should be understood: but what was open to common view, he was wont to discourse of instructively, both as lying under the direction of Providence and as relating to the interest of religion.

Nor was he wont to banish out of his conversation the pleasantness that fitly belonged to it; for which his large acquaintance with a most delightful variety of story, both ancient and modern, gave him advantage beyond most; his judicious memory being a copious promptuary of what was profitable and facetious, and disdaining to be the receptacle of useless trash. To place religion in a morose sourness was remote from his practice, his judgment, and his temper. But his discourses, taking in often things of a different nature, were interwoven with religion and centered in it; especially such things as were most intimate and vital to it: of those

things he was wont to speak with that savour and relish as plainly showed he spake not forcedly, or with affectation,—as acting a part,—but from the settled temper and habit of his soul. Into what transports of admiration of the love of God, have I seen him break forth, when some things foreign or not immediately relating to practical godliness, had taken up a good part of our time! How easy a step did he make of it from earth to heaven! Such as have been wont, in a more stated course, to resort to him, can tell whether, when other occasions did fall in and claim their part in the discourses of that season, he did not usually send them away with somewhat that tended to better their spirits, and quicken them in their way heaven-ward. With how high flights of thought and affection was he wont to speak of the heavenly state! even like a man much more of kin to that other world than to this! And for his ministerial qualifications and labours, do I need to say anything to themselves, who had the benefit thereof? either them, who have so many years lived under his most fruitful, enlightening, quickening, edifying ministry? whether week by week, as his beloved, peculiarly privileged charge at Hackney, that mournful, desolate people! who have been fed with the heavenly, hidden manna, and with the fruits of the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise of God; so prepared and presented to them and made pleasant to their taste, as few besides have ever had: but now sit in sorrow, hopeless of full or any equal relief, but by transportation into that paradise itself, whence all their refections were wont to come;—or do I need to inform such inhabitants of London, as in a doubled three monthly course have for many years, in throng-assembly, been wont to hang upon his lips? to whose, if to any one's in our days, the characters belonged, of the wise and the righteous man's lips, which are said to disperse knowledge;[1] and (which is therefore most agreeable) to feed many. Or can it be needful to acquaint the world, who have volumes of his discourses or

[1] Prov. xv. 7; chap. x. 21.

sermons in their hands? or tell them of their singular excellencies, who can as well tell me? I can speak to none of his great worth and accomplishments, as a richly furnished and most skilful dispenser of Divine knowledge and of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, an instructed scribe, able to bring forth of his treasury things new and old; but who may say to me, as those Samaritan Christians, 'We believe him to be such, not because of thy saying, for we have heard or read him ourselves.' And they may say so with judgment upon this proof, that shall consider both the select, choice, and most important matter of his tractates and sermons, published or unpublished; and the peculiar way and manner of his tractation thereof.

For the former: the choice of subjects and of such materials of discourse as are to be reduced and gathered into them, discovers as much of the judgment, spirit, and design of the compiler, as anything we can think of. When we consider what sort of things a man's mind hath been exercised and taken up about, through so long a course and tract of time; we may see what things he counted great, important, necessary to be insisted on, and most conducing to the ends which one of his calling and station ought to design and aim at; and are thereupon to appeal to ourselves, whether he did not judge and design aright, and as he ought:—as, what could be of greater importance, than to discover the 'harmony of God's attributes,' in the work of saving sinners? the 'final happiness' of man? the 'four last things,' etc.? What more important than that of 'spiritual perfection?' which last he dropped, as Elijah his mantle, when he was to ascend into that state most perfectly perfect, wherein that which he had been discoursing of finally terminates. Read it, and invocate the Lord God of Elijah, saying, Where is He? Nor were his discourses of less consequence, that in his stated course he delivered to his constant hearers. They were always much allied to the lamp, and did not need to fear the brightest light. His last sermon in this place (who of us thought it the last, hearing it delivered with so much life

and spirit?) challenges our re-consideration over and over It was about sins against knowledge, from Luke xii. 47. A warning to the age, uttered, though not faintly, as with his dying breath. Oh that it could have reached ears and hearts, as far as the concern of it doth reach! The sins of our days, of professors and of others, are more generally sins against knowledge than heretofore, and may make us expect and dread the more stripes that text speaks of.

As for his manner and way of handling what he undertook, we may use the words which he recites from the incomparable Bishop Wilkins concerning Mr. Baxter; which, no doubt, if there had then been the occasion, he would have judged not unapplicable here also: that he cultivated every subject he handled, and had he lived in an age of the Fathers, he would have been one. His method, in all his discourses, might be exposed to the most critical censurer. What could be more accurate? And for his style, it was even inimitably polite and fine; but to him so natural, that it was more uneasy to have used a coarser style, than, to others, so neat a one as his was. Nor is it to be thought strange, that there should be in this a peculiarity; style being to any man as appropriate, upon the matter, as his visage or voice: and as immediately depending on the temper of the mind,—in conjunction with fancy, as that is more or less brisk, lively and vigorous,—as the other do on the complexion of the body or the disposition of the organs of speech. They that would in this case attempt to force nature, would, I suspect, be very awkward at it, would bungle scurvily, and soon find, they had better be content to creep on all-four than aim to fly and soar with borrowed wings or stolen feathers. If God with a man's nature gives a disposition of this kind, it may in his younger years admit of innocent improvement: but that which is most peculiar to any in this respect, is what one insensibly slides into, with no more design than one hath to walk after this or that manner; by which yet many persons are known and distinguishable from other men.

But I doubt not that excellency in any such kind,—as hath

been anciently observed of poetry and oratory,—must have its foundation in nature; and they that will strive against that stream will soon perceive, that such proverbial sayings were grounded upon prudent observation and long experience, "That a Mercury is not to be made of every log;" and that "Nothing is to be attempted *invitâ Minervâ*, or against one's genius, and natural inclination." Therefore that monition, *Lege historiam, ne fias historia*, one may vary and say, *Cave, etc.*: "Take heed of a proverb, lest thou become a proverb." That is easy and pleasant which is natural.[1] And now when the grace of God supervenes, and doth exalt and sublimate nature, it makes that mean beginning, and its progress into use and custom,—which is said to be a second nature,—subservient to very high and excellent purposes; as is eminently conspicuous in the Doctor's peculiar way of preaching and writing,—especially in his frequent most apt similitudes and allusions, to be attributed to a brisk and vivid fancy, regulated by judgment, and sanctified by Divine grace,—so as greatly to serve his pious purpose; to illustrate the truth he designed to recommend, and give it the greatest advantage of entering into the mind with light and pleasure, and at once both to instruct and delight his reader or hearer. And so much more grateful have his illustrations been, by how much the more they have been surprising, and remote from any forethought in them that read or heard. And I may here freely put his most constant attentive hearers upon recollecting, whether he have not usually pleased them by surprising them,—for I know there are surprisals ungrateful enough,—and in most sermons, whether they did not meet with what they did not expect from him; and might in vain have expected from anybody else?

Some, it is possible, may find fault with that in this kind, to which they can do nothing like themselves; who yet, I hope, may admit of conviction of their own fault herein by gentler means than by being put in mind of the fable. They

[1] Πᾶν φυσικὸν ἡδύ.

might, upon the matter, as well find fault, that God had made him a taller man than the most, perhaps than themselves; or of a more comely complexion; or that all were not of one stature, size, or feature. If any do, it is most probably such to whom one may truly say, they blame what they could not mend nor he help; at least, without much pain to himself, and to no purpose. One may venture to say, that in that fine way of expressing himself which was become habitual to him, he much more pleased others than himself. For in the excellent Mr. Baxter he highly commends much another way,—saying of him, "He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style; for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words."[1] Very excellent men excel in different ways: the most radiant stones may differ in colour, when they do not in value.

His judgment in ecclesiastical matters was to be known by his practice; and it was such, that he needed not care who knew it. He was for entire union of all visible Christians, (or saints, or believers, which in Scripture are equivalent terms;) meaning by Christianity what is essential thereto, whether doctrinal or practical, as by humanity we mean what is essential to man,—severing accidents, as not being of the essence; and by visibility, the probable appearance thereof: and for free communion of all such, of whatsoever persuasion in extra-essential matters, if they pleased. And this design he vigorously pursued as long as there was any hope; desisting when it appeared hopeless, and resolving to wait till God should give a spirit suitable hereto,—from an apprehension that when principles on all hands were so easily accommodable, and yet that there was with too many a remaining insuperable reluctancy to the thing itself, God must work the cure, and not man:—accounting also, in the meantime, that notwithstanding misrepresentations, it was better to cast a mantle over the failings of brethren than

[1] In his Funeral Sermon, page 90.

be concerned to detect and expose them: knowing that if we be principally solicitous for the name of God, he will in his own way and time take care of ours. And in this sentiment he was not alone.

But now is this great luminary, this burning and shining light—not extinct, but—gone out of our horizon. We for a season rejoiced in this light, and are we not to mourn for its disappearance? Yet not without hope. Oh! the inconceivable loss of his domestical relatives, who in respect of his most private capacity and conversation are deprived of such a head, father, and guide! Yet in this lies their advantage, that since nothing that is mortal can fill up his room, they are under a necessity to betake themselves thither where the surest and fullest relief is to be had; having in the meantime among mortals a far greater number of fellow-sufferers and fellow-mourners to bear a part with them in their sorrows, and ready to afford them all suitable consolation, than most in this world can be capable of expecting in such a case. Let those of his own peculiar charge, let those that were wont,—though not so often,—in a stated course to hear him in this place, with all other his more occasional hearers, mourn that they are to hear no more his weighty sentences, his sweet honey-dropping words: let them mourn that never heard to purpose, that were never allured, never won, that were always deaf to this charmer, though charming so wisely. Let those that have got good by him mourn, that in this way they are to get no more; those that have got none, that they have lost so much of their day; that they are to be addressed by this persuasive advocate for Christ and their own souls no more. Let his brethren, all of us, mourn, that we have lost so prudent, so humble, so instructive, so encouraging a guide, so bright an ornament, from among us.

But let none of us mourn without hope. God will be a Husband to the widow trusting in Him, and the Father of the fatherless taking God in Christ for their Father and their God. He hath not forgot the titles He hath assumed. He can also find or make for his widowed church, a pastor "after

His own heart:" and the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, that gave His life for the sheep, though He was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore. All his hearers, though they are no more to hear his pleasant human voice sounding in their ears, if they attend and listen, may hear a Divine voice crying after them, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And let them know that the gospel he preached is immortal and never dies, though "all flesh is grass;" and his own books, though he is dead, yet speak. We his brethren were to follow him, as he followed Christ; who will Himself be with us always to the end. The work wherein he was engaged was common to him and us. Herein if we follow him, though not with equal steps, faithfully endeavouring to turn many to righteousness, "we shall shine," as he doth, "like the stars in the firmament,"—we need not be solicitous, though not with equal lustre; "as one star differs from another in glory."[1]

The cause wherein he was engaged unto his death and from which no offered emoluments or dignities could ever draw him, was not that of a party; for he was of none, and was of too large a mind to be of any, but that noble cause of union and communion with all Christians that "hold the head." That cause is not dead with him. Now that he is dead, we are to say, as that is the voice of the Christian faith, of Divine and brotherly love, 'Let us die with him;' but *not* as it is the voice of despondency or despair. Let us covet to be with him in that blessed state, the reality whereof we believe, and of which our faith is to be to us the substance and evidence.

I know no good man that knowing him would not say, 'Let me die with him.' I very well know who would; and if breasts could be laid open to inspection as by a glass, do know in whose breast this sense would be found, engraven as with the point of a diamond: 'Oh that my soul were in his soul's stead; or if the Supreme Disposer had thought fit, or seen an equal fitness for translation, that I had died with

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 41.

him.' But, knowing his much greater usefulness in this world, Oh that I had died for him. For since it is expressly said, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren,"[1] a life that could regularly and effectually have redeemed his, had been laid down for many, in that one of holy, prudent, heavenly Dr. Bates. This is the sense of one not weary, blessed be God! of the business of life, and that enjoys as much of the comforts of life as any man can reasonably wish,—scarce any one more. But it must be confessed, as this world was not worthy of this servant of Christ, it is become far less worthy now so excellent a person hath left it. His love, his converse, was pleasant beyond what can be expressed! It is now a grievance not to have a part with the silent mourners, when lamentations could freely have been poured forth without noise or interruption! As the case is, necessity lays a restraint, and leaves it an easier thing to die than weep out; otherwise can one be shy,—in a way that can admit it,—to tell the world, that to live in it, now he is dead out of it, much less deserves the name of life? It can be felt that those words, among the many Divine raptures of that holy man,[2] have a most perceptible meaning; "When I got health, thou took'st away my life; and more,—for my friends die." If one may innocently borrow words from so impure a mouth *as Julian's*, they are very expressive; 'I scarce count myself a man, when without Jamblichus.'[3]

Here were two souls knit together as the soul of one man; what there is of present separation shall be but for a little while. And by how much the separation is more grievous, the re-union will be with the stronger propension and the more delightful everlasting cohesion: as also separation from this terrene clog will be much the easier; one great weight is added above, to pully up what ought to ascend thither. How can that but be a blessed state, into which He that is essential love, hath caught up such a man? one in so great part transformed before into the same likeness, and

[1] 1 John iii. 16. [2] Herbert. [3] Julian, *Epist. ad Jambl.*—ἄν—μὴ συνῶ.

fitted to dwell in love! And accordingly God took him; even kissed away his soul, as hath been said of those great favourites of heaven; did let him die without being sick; vouchsafed him that great privilege,—which a good man would choose before many,—not to outlive serviceableness. To live till one be weary of the world, not till the world be weary of him,—thus he prayed wisely, thus God answered graciously.

But be it far from us to say, 'Let us die with him,' as despairing of our cause, if our cause be not that of any self-distinguished party, but truly that common Christian cause, of which you have heard. While it is the Divine pleasure to continue us here, let us be content, and submit to live and own it, to live and serve it, to our uttermost. If ever God design good days to the Christian church on earth, this is the cause that must prevail, and triumph in a glorious conquest over death. But I must freely tell you my apprehensions,—which I have often hinted,—that I fear it must die first, I mean a temporary death; I fear it, for it hath been long gradually dying already; and spiritual diseases which have this tendency, are both sinful and penal. Lazarus's death and resurrection I think to have been meant for a sort of prolusion to the death and resurrection of Christ, both personal and mystical. I only say this for illustration, not for proof. That sickness and death of his was not in order to a permanent death, but for the glory of God; that when the case was deplorate and hopeless, and he four days buried, he might surprisingly spring up again alive. I know not but the sickness and death of this our incomparably worthy friend, (and for aught I know of many more of us,) may be appointed the same way to be for the glory of God; that is, as tending to introduce that death which is to pass upon our common cause; which such men help to keep alive by their earnest strugglings, though in a languishing, fainting condition every hour.

Think me not so vain as to reckon exclusively the cause of Dissenters the cause I now speak of; no, no, I speak of the

common cause of all serious, sober-minded Christians, within the common rule or without it. I neither think any one party to include all sobriety of mind, or to exclude all insobriety. But I apprehend converting work to be much at a stand *within* the pales that men have set up,—severing one party from another,—and *without* them. Few are anywhere brought home to God through Christ. And God knows too few design it, otherwise than to make proselytes to their several parties: and this is thought a glorious conversion. Serious piety and Christianity languishes everywhere. Many that have a name to live are dead, and putrified,—already stink! Common justice and righteousness are fled from among us. Sincerely good and pious men die away in the natural sense apace. You know, if deaths and burials should in the weekly bills exceed births and other accessions to the city, whither this tends. When so many great lights are withdrawn, both such as were within the national church constitution and such as were without it, is there no danger God should also remove the candlestick?

Our obduration and insensible stupidity portends a deadly darkness to be drawing on. And must such lives go, to make a way for God's anger? and lead on a more general and more dreadful approaching death? "Oh that God would rend the heavens and come down!" He may yet melt our hearts, and make them "flow at his presence," notwithstanding their mountainous, rocky height and hardness. This may be the means of saving some souls, and of deferring the common calamity. A great thing it would be to have it deferred. What a privilege would many servants of Christ count it, not to live to the day when the Spirit of the living God shall be generally retired and gone; and atheism, scepticism, infidelity, worldliness and formality, have quite swallowed up our religion! While such men as we have lost, lived, they did,—and such do,—as instruments, keep somewhat of serious religion alive, under our several forms, but as ready to expire. But though it should seem generally to have expired, let us believe it shall revive. When our confidences

and vain boasts cease, "The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord!" "Lo, here is Christ, and there is Christ!" and one sort ceases to magnify this church, and another that, and a universal death is come upon us, then (and I am afraid, not till then) is to be expected a glorious resurrection,—not of this or that party, for living, powerful religion, when it recovers, will disdain the limits of a party; nor is it to be thought that religion, modified by the devised distinctions of this or that party, will ever be the religion of the world;—but the same power that makes us return into a state of life, will bring us into a state of unity, in divine light and love. Then will all the scandalous marks and means of division among Christians vanish; and nothing remain as a test or boundary of Christian communion, but what hath its foundation, as such, in plain reason or express revelation. Then, as "there is one body and one Spirit," will that Almighty Spirit so animate and form this body, as to make it everywhere amiable, self-recommending and capable of spreading and propagating itself, and to "increase with the increase of God." "Then shall the Lord be one, and his name one, in all the earth."

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

THAT VERY REVEREND AND MOST LABORIOUS SERVANT
OF CHRIST, IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY,

MR. MATTHEW MEAD,

WHO DECEASED OCTOBER 16, 1699.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN AND FRANCES

THE LORD AND LADY HAVERSHAM.

May it please your Honours,

The request of the mournful widow and other relatives of the worthy person deceased, concurring with my own inclination, left with me no room to deliberate concerning this inscription. I easily apprehend how quick and deep a sense you both have of the loss of such another valuable person from off this earth, having so lately borne your part in lamenting the decease of one you much valued also; upon which account I put into your hands a discourse on those words,[1] "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Such persons leave this world so fast, that it grows a more difficult choice with whom to live than with whom to die. When on that sad occasion I did set myself to consider that passage of Holy Scripture, I had seen some expositors that made it a doubt whether that were meant of Lazarus, or of our Lord himself. Some of good note thought the latter: for which was plausibly to be alleged what we find verse 8, and that in this verse 16 the words were spoken not to Christ, but to the fellow-disciples. That doubt was not to have been moved in an assembly, where was neither time nor a fit season to discuss it. And, though I might more conveniently, I shall not say much to it now: only I judge, that

[1] John xi. 16.

without necessity the present coherence was not to be torn, when by the series of discourse the same *him* seems plainly to be referred to in the close of the 15th verse, and of this 16th;—"Lazarus is dead," verse 14,—nevertheless let us go to *him*, verse 15,—"Let us also go, that we may die with *him*." It was little needful to say to Christ, 'Let us go,' whose mind appeared set upon going already; but to the disciples who drew back; besides that reverence might restrain from saying this to our Lord, when what was to be proposed was matter of hortation, not of *inquiry*,—though sometimes they feared even to ask him a question also; as Luke ix. 45. And they might the rather be now under a present awe, from the rebuke or expostulatory answer he had given them for their objecting against going into Judea; especially, so as not to signify a remaining fear, which he had so newly checked. Therefore Thomas's speech, directed to his fellow-disciples, but not out of Christ's hearing, (for we have no reason to suppose that he separated them from Him, that he might say this to them apart,) is so ordered, as not to import fear of death, but love to the deceased.

If any should object, that Thomas could not mean dying *with* Lazarus, when he was told he was already dead,—that scarce deserves answer to any one that understands the latitude of the particle rendered *with*; especially, that it frequently signifies *after*, and not always *with*, and very often notes nothing of time at all; and therefore may here mean no more, than, Let us go that we may die too, or die as well as he. All this I say, not that I have heard any person in our days object against, or plead for, this or that sense of these words; but, knowing they have been differently understood and this being the first opportunity I had to take public notice of the difference, I am not ill pleased that I have now this occasion of representing it to so competent judges; partly to prevent objection, or at least to show with what temper of mind any such different apprehensions, in matters of no greater moment, ought to be looked upon. Nor shall I here vie authorities of commentators that have gone this way or that, in this matter. Therefore I name none: only some of as great name as any have judged this the more probable opinion, which I have followed.

Many instances might be given wherein, when matters extra-essential to the sum of our religion are delivered, one sense must be pitched upon, though another very diverse (of which there cannot

be two) is not to be demonstrated impossible: in which case I much prefer a tacit following that which one chooses, before a conceited confidence and crying down of the other. For confident clamour neither admits light, nor tends to enlighten anybody.

In the present case, it makes no difference to any disadvantage. For if we desire to be united in death, or in that state to which it introduces, with this or that holy man; to be with our blessed Lord in that state, must be much more desirable. But the departure of the excellent ones of the earth from it, leaves us less here of present attractive, and gives us a very threatening prospect and presage of what we are to expect for the future.

Your lordship's great respect to this servant of Christ was even hereditary, and descended to him by you from your family; as I have often heard him acknowledge, with great sense of obligation. And, madam, your ladyship's great value of him,—though it might take its first rise from so near and judicious a relative,—could not but receive a great increase from his known worth and your own discerning judgment. I pray, (not doubting it,) that with whatsoever kindness you have received any prophet or other servant of Christ, in that name, you may have a proportionable reward; and am, my most honoured lord and lady,

Your most obliged, humble servant,

In the work of the gospel,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE VERY REVEREND AND MOST LABORIOUS SERVANT OF CHRIST, IN THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY,

MR. MATTHEW MEAD.

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1 TIM. iv. 16.

"THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF, AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE."

THESE words I principally design to insist upon at this time, and on this sad and mournful occasion; but not without retrospection to the foregoing verse, and the former part of this; which runs thus: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.[1] Take heed to thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."[2] This whole foregoing context contains precepts which, reduced to practice, afford an eminent example and pattern of a true gospel preacher, or, as the words are,[3] of a "good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." As these last words show the blessed end and issue of such a one's ministry,—that is, that he shall save himself, which must be looked upon as certain, and them that hear him; that is, as much as in him lies, he shall herein do his part, and what is incumbent upon

[1] Ver. 15. [2] Ver. 16. [3] Ver. 6.

him, to the saving of his hearers,—these latter words hold forth the double end which a minister of Christ is to pursue, the saving his own and his people's souls. The foregoing words, considered in reference to these, contain the proper means he is to use in order to this twofold end; that is, he is to meditate much on the great things of the Gospel. He is to be wholly "*in* them,"[1] as the words literally import which we read, He is "to give himself wholly *to* them." He is to be continually increasing in the knowledge of God, and that so as not to know only to himself, but so as to make known what he knows. He is especially (though that be the common duty of Christians) to turn all to the use of edifying,[2] "that his profiting may appear to all." For though Timothy was at this time a young man, yet the most grown did always need to be still growing. None have here attained their *ne plus ultra*, but may still write for their motto, *plus ultra*, all their days; even Paul the aged, as he writes himself to Philemon, tells the Philippians, (both those epistles being dated from Rome and supposed to be written about the same time, when he was first there,) that he had "not yet attained," in point of the transforming knowledge of Christ.[3] And unto what pitch soever he grew, it was still in order to communication. He writes to the Corinthians, that he "determined to know nothing among them,—"[4] which is so to know, as to make known,—"nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified:" and to the Ephesians, that he "would have them understand his knowledge in the mystery of Christ;"[5] no doubt that their salvation might be promoted thereby. And hereupon, in great part, depends a minister's own salvation, as hereafter will further appear. But besides, he is to take heed to himself, and see to the good state of his own soul; he is to take heed to his doctrine, not to corrupt or handle deceitfully the word of God, but represent it sincerely, "as the truth is in Jesus." He is to continue in

[1] Ἐν τούτοις ἴσθι. In a better than the Poet's sense, scire tuum nihil est.
[2] Eph. iv. 29.
[3] Phil. iii. 10, 11.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 2.
[5] Eph. iii. 4.

them; that is, in the things he before exhorts him to meditate on, and be wholly in them; to continue in the faith of what was to be believed and the practice of what was to be done, and in pressing and insisting on both; and all for the mentioned ends, that he might both save himself and those that hear him.—And it is this twofold end of a minister's care and labour, that will take us up at this time. This is that, therefore, which, as God shall help, I am to evince and apply; namely, that a minister of Christ is to make it his business, both to save himself and his hearers. I am, as the text directs, to speak of these two ends conjunctly.—And here I shall not spend time, or use a liberty beyond what is obvious and useful, in inquiring into the counsel of God, why he makes use of such, in order to the saving of others, as need to be saved themselves also; but shall principally insist, that since it appears to be God's pleasure to make use of such, they should therefore most earnestly concern themselves, and be very intent upon carrying on this design; namely, of their own, conjunctly with that of their hearers' salvation. Yet as to the former of these:—

First. Somewhat it may be requisite to say, concerning this course and method which we find the wisdom and good pleasure of God have pitched upon, for the carrying on a saving design in this world; to make use of such for the saving of others as do need to endeavour the saving of themselves. And here I shall briefly show—I. How it is to be understood;—II. How the fitness of this course may be evinced.

I. As to the former we shall briefly note, that we must be cautious to understand aright, how and in what sense, any one can be said to save himself, or another. Therefore,

1. It must be understood so as to keep at a remote and awful distance from intrenching upon a Divine prerogative; it being most expressly said, "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour:"[1] "There is no God beside

[1] Isaiah xliii. 11.

me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else:"[1]—which plainly signifies, that in the highest sense to save, is most appropriate to Deity; especially "with an everlasting salvation," as it is expressed,—"Israel shall be saved in" or by "the Lord, with an everlasting salvation;"[2] and that to be *so* a Saviour, is equally incommunicable, as to be God. How gloriously doth he triumph in this excellent peculiarity of the Godhead, in his expostulations with Job:[3] "Hast thou an arm like God?" as much as to say, 'Come, let us compare; stretch out that weak, withered, ulcerous arm of thine. Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, array thyself with glory and beauty; try if thou canst make thyself shine in God-like splendour; cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; behold every one that is proud and abase him. Try thy power upon thy fellow-mortals. See if thou canst crush all the haughty ones of this world, bring them down and bind their faces in the dust of the grave. And—to recall thee to the greater things mentioned before—try if thou canst form me such another earth as this, establish its foundations, lay its corner-stone. If thou canst countermand the motions, bind up the influences of the stars in the heavens, then will I confess unto thee that thy own right hand can save thee.'[4] It is, it seems, as much above created power to be a Saviour, as to be the creator or ruler of the world. And how should we dread to think of usurping the title and office of the great Immanuel, the Saviour, who is therefore "called Jesus," because he was to "save his people from their sins."[5]

2. Yet there is a true sense wherein the saving act and power are otherwise and very variously ascribed; sometimes to faith: "Thy faith hath saved thee;"[6] sometimes to hope: "We are saved by hope;"[7] sometimes to baptism: "Baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the

[1] Isaiah xlv. 21, 22. [2] Ver. 17. [3] Job xl. 9. [4] Ver. 14.
[5] Matt. i. 21. [6] Luke vii. 50. [7] Rom. viii. 24.

flesh, etc.;"[1] sometimes to husbands and wives in reference to one another.[2] So is the gospel called "the gospel of our salvation:"[3] "And to you is the word of this salvation sent."[4] So are we exhorted to save ourselves:[5] and others,—"Others save with fear."[6] Thus in lower matters is the act of writing, for instance, ascribed to the pen, to the hand that uses it, and to the writer himself that moves both; and we have no difficulty to understand those different forms of speech: nor is there a greater difficulty in the present case, so to ascribe to the creature the low subordinate agency which in distinct capacities may belong to it, as in the meantime to reserve to God and Christ the supreme agency which is most peculiar and appropriate to Divine power and grace.[7]

II. We now come next to show, that it was very manifestly agreeable to the most accurate wisdom of God to employ such in the design and work of saving others, as were themselves concerned and needed to be saved too; that were to be upon the same bottom themselves with the rest; and to venture their own souls and their everlasting concernments the same way and into the same hands. And this we shall labour to clear and make evident by degrees.

1. It was fit, since creatures were to be employed in this work, to make use of intelligent creatures, such as could understand their own errand and act with design in pursuance of it.

2. Mankind was universally lost,—so as all do need being saved themselves.

3. Therefore no intelligent creatures else could be employed herein but the unfallen angels.

4. We may adventure to say after God, and when he hath so determined the matter himself,—though it was not fit for us to have said it before him, as if we would "direct the Spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellors would instruct him,"[8]—that it was more suitable to make use to this purpose of sinful

[1] 1 Pet. iii. 21. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 16. [3] Eph. i. 13.
[4] Acts xiii. 26. [5] Acts ii. 40. [6] Jude 23.
[7] 1 Pet. i. 5; Eph. ii. 8. [8] Isaiah xl. 13; Rom. xi. 34.

men than of sinless angels. Let us sever and lay aside herein, what may at first sight seem specious, but is really not considerable in this matter; as, that men in the same miserable circumstances with those whom they are to persuade, that they may save them, will be so much the more earnest and importunate,—use so much the more pressing arguments,—as having been upon the brink of hell and the borders of destruction; for we suppose such as are most likely to promote the salvation of others, to have been made sensible of their own undone, lost state, and to be in a way of recovery themselves. But hereupon it may also be supposed, they will therefore so much the more pathetically plead with sinners. Their knowledge of the "terrors of the Lord" will urge them to persuade men,[1] and make them eloquent at it. But what! more than angels? When the apostle[2] supposes one speaking with the tongue of men and angels, doth he not intend a gradation, and signify the latter far to excel? And are we to suppose that the benignity of their own natures, their kindness to man and their perfect conformity and obediential compliance and subjection to the will of their sovereign Lord, would not have obliged them to do their uttermost, if he had sent them upon such errands? We cannot doubt it. But,

i. It is apparent that what the blessed God doth in pursuance of this saving design, he doth to the praise of the glory of his grace, and that it might appear the more conspicuous in the whole conduct of this affair.

ii. That it is not within the compass of any created, no not of angelical power, to change the hearts of men, and turn them to God. If angels were the constant preachers in all our assemblies, they could not with all their heavenly eloquence convert one sinner, if the immediate Divine power did not exert itself. "The people are willing in the day of His power," who was God-man.[3] The Jews at mount Sinai "received the law by the disposition of angels, yet kept it not."[4]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 11.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 1.
[3] As Ps. cx. 3.
[4] Acts vii. 53.

iii. Yet if God should put forth his own power by such a ministration; if angels should appear in glorious array among us, and speak to men with greater advantage and more persuasive eloquence than we can conceive, and marvellous effects by Divine concurrence should ensue; those great effects among a sort of creatures led by sense, and who judge by the sight of the eye, would all be ascribed to the visibly glorious instrument, not to the supreme agent, who is invisible and out of sight; even as in effects of another kind, the invisible power and Godhead, that do all, are little regarded by stupid man, whose dull eye stays and rests in the visible outside, and fixes his mind there too.

iv. Therefore the rich treasures of the gospel are put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be,—that is, might appear to be,—of God,[1] and not of the inferior instrument.

v. In this way of dispensation, wherein God speaks to men *by men* liable to the same passions with themselves, he accommodates himself to their frail state,—who cannot bear glorious appearances,—and to their own option and desires; who say to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."[2] When they had heard "the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of words," accompanied with thunders and lightnings, they entreated that they might hear no more.[3] The celestial glory, while our mould and frame is dust, doth more astonish than instruct. Those soft and pleasant words, "This is my beloved Son,—hear him," spoken by a voice from the excellent glory, in the transfiguration, made the disciples that heard them sore afraid, and fall on their faces.[4] How would it unhinge the world and discompose the whole state of civil affairs, if all conversions were to be as Saul's was when he became Paul, with such concomitant effects, not only on himself, but all others present; especially being wrought (as most conversions may

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 7.
[2] Ex. xx. 19.
[3] Heb. xii. 19.
[4] Matt. xvii. 5, 6.

be) in numerous assemblies, the convert struck blind for some days, and all that were in the place speechless! Perhaps we have one such instance to let us see how inconvenient it were such instances should be common, or that this should be God's ordinary way of converting and saving sinners.

vi. The holding of men in this world under the ministry of men, not of angels, in reference to the affairs of their salvation, is certainly more suitable to the condition of probationers for eternity and another world; and more aptly subservient to the business of the judgment day, when all the talents men were intrusted with, their natural endowments and faculties as well as additional advantages, are to be accounted for. We shall hereafter understand better, but may in good measure conjecture now, why there is so fixed a gulf by the wisdom and counsel of God between the two worlds, the visible and the invisible, and so little commerce between them.

And whereas in the Old Testament the apparition of angels was more frequent, that passage,—"The world to come" being said not to be put "in subjection to angels,"—seems to signify the time after the Messiah's appearing should be more entirely left to the conduct of a gospel ministry, as the connexion intimates.[1]

vii. And though the compassions of men who have been in danger to perish themselves, cannot be supposed more powerfully to influence them unto an earnest endeavour of saving them that are in the like danger, than the kindness and benignity of angels would do, if they were so employed; yet their concern to save others, who are also to be saved themselves the same way, is likely, more easily, more generally, more sensibly, to be apprehended by those others, to whom they are to apply themselves upon this account. They have kinder thoughts of one another than they are like to have of a superior order of creatures. Their own flesh and blood is nearer akin to them; yea, they are more apt to love

[1] Heb. ii. 4, 5.

one another, and consequently to apprehend one another's love, than the blessed God himself; which is more than intimated in that of that holy apostle:[1] "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Things affect us not merely as they are, but as they are understood. Ministers cannot be kinder to men's souls than the blessed angels, among whom there is a joy for the conversion of a sinner much more pure, exalted, and sublime than a human breast is capable of; and, in proportion, more fervent desire of such conversions: but their propensions towards us, though they should be expressed by counsels and precepts that tend to our good, would be less apprehended by most men; they carry a severity with them, which makes them need such insinuative recommendations as slide more easily into their minds from creatures of their own order.

viii. Our Lord himself was so concerned for the saving of souls, as who could be besides? But though before the flood He is said to have preached to the old world, it was by his Spirit in the ministry of Noah, a man like themselves to whom he preached. But when He thought fit to preach immediately himself, he put on flesh, and dwelt, or did tabernacle among men as one of them.[2] So Moses foretold: "A prophet like unto me shall God raise up, him shall ye hear."[3] So his terror was not to make us afraid. And though his compassionateness towards us is argued from his being tempted and compassed with infirmities[4] as we are, that cannot be understood as if hereby he became more gracious and merciful towards us in himself; but his being so, was the more apprehensible to us.

ix. The steadiness of the course God hath taken in this matter shows what his judgment was of the fitness of it; "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."[5] It is observable, that when our Lord was now

[1] 1 John iv. 20. [2] John i. 14. [3] Acts iii. 22, from Deut. xviii. 15.
[4] Heb. iv. 15. [5] Eph. i. 11.

about to ascend, he fixes a ministry that he promises his presence unto, always, or every day, unto the end of the world.[1] Ascending on high "he gave," among other, "these gifts to men,—even to the rebellious,[2]—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers."[3] And that he might put an honour upon this ministry, when he designed the gospel to be preached to Cornelius and his relatives; though he prepares Peter by a vision, and sends an angel to Cornelius, it was not to preach to him, but to direct him to send for Peter to preach to him and his; who tells him, when he fell at his feet, "I also am a man."[4] We are human preachers, though from a Divine Master and Lord, and of a Divine word.

Secondly. But now the mind and counsel of God being sufficiently evident in this matter,—both in the fact and in the fitness of it,—to make use of such, for promoting the common salvation as do need themselves to partake therein: we come now to show, that the ministers of the gospel of Christ ought to be very intent upon the business of their own salvation, conjunctly with that of them that hear them; and of theirs with their own. There is a double obligation meeting upon a minister of the gospel: that of the law of nature, and of the law of his office; he is to comply with both. Nature obliges him to intend his own salvation; his office, theirs that hear him. The same authority lays him under the one obligation and the other. For He that is the author of nature, is the author of his office too.

I. He ought so to mind the concern of his people's salvation, as not to neglect his own. This is so evident in itself, that it would be superfluous to speak to it, were it not that we, as well as they to whom we preach, do need to be put in remembrance of very important things, though we know them.[5] To 'know' and to 'consider,' we not only may dis-

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [2] Ps. lxviii. 18. [3] Eph. iv. 8—11.
[4] Acts x. [5] 2 Pet. i. 12.

tinguish, but do too often separate. And there are divers things to be considered to this purpose.

1. That the royal law, as it is called,[1] which requires us to love our neighbour as oneself, makes love to ourselves, (that is, not merely which we bear, but which we owe to ourselves,) the measure of that which we ought to have for our neighbour. And that which ought to be the measure in any kind, should be the most perfect in that kind; and must oblige us to love first our most *noble* self,—our own souls.

2. It is gross hypocrisy to seem earnestly intent upon saving other men, and to be neglectful of one's own salvation. It is sin only which endangers both, meant by the 'mote' and the 'beam.'[2] And our Saviour, we see there, stigmatizes such a one with the brand of a hypocrite, that is officious to take out the mote from his brother's eye, but never concerns himself to cast out the beam from his own eye.

3. It is a scandalous and an ignominious absurdity, as the apostle's sharp expostulations imply,[3] to take upon oneself to be "a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness,"—to take up with having a form of knowledge and of the truth in the law, and to teach others,—and not to teach oneself! Preachest thou—as he adds—"a man should not steal, and dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, by breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" This is that which makes the name of God be blasphemed among the Gentiles; as he tells us it is "written," referring to some texts in the Old Testament.[4] It is a blackening thing when it can be said, "I was keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept."[5] Our Lord speaks of it as a reproachful proverb, which he, knowing the hearts of men, observed some were apt

[1] James ii. 8. [2] Matt. vii. 3—5. [3] Rom. ii. 19—22.
[4] Ezek. xvi. 47—52; xxxvi. 22. [5] Cant. i. 6.

to misapply to him,[1] (noted to have been in use among the Greeks, and which with that empire had reached Judea,) "Physician, heal thyself." It would be very opprobrious to us who are in the ministry, if it could be truly said to us, we seem concerned at the diseasedness that appears in our flocks, but overlook the diseases and distempers of our own souls. That was meant for a bitter reproach to our Lord dying upon the cross,—"He saved others, himself he cannot save." To us, if it might be truly said, it must be a just reproach as well as bitter; our saving ourselves being our duty enjoined us, and tending to the saving of others; whereas our Lord's saving himself, in the sense intended by those scoffers, was against the law he was then under, and against his own design; tending to overthrow it, and leave them to perish, whom he was dying to save.

4. The observable neglect of the design to save our own souls, would defeat and destroy the other design of saving theirs that hear us. For who can think us serious in our preaching, or that we believe ourselves in what we say, if we manifestly decline, ourselves, that way of salvation which we propose to others? We tempt men to infidelity if we live like infidels.

It was a cutting repartee made by an atheistical person, to one that, leading an ill life, yet professed to wonder that the other, (the argument for a Deity being so plain and cogent,) did not own there was a God; the other replied, he much more wondered, that he who did own Him, should yet live as he did! This tends to overthrow all our preaching. Though our Saviour directs to do as they *said*, who sat in Moses's chair, not as they *did*, because they said and did not, yet he did not thereby justify those self-repugnant teachers, for his reflection upon them is sufficiently severe. And we are to consider in the case, not merely what man's duty is, but what their dispositions are; not what they ought, but what they are apt to do. If they think we do but act a part, when

[1] Luke iv. 23.

we speak never so movingly to them, they will be little moved by all that we can say. They will be more apt to conclude, that we who have studied and searched into the matters of religion more than they have done, have found some flaw at the bottom, and perceive the very foundations of it to be infirm; and therefore practise not according to the doctrines and rules of it: but that for our *gain*,—because it was the calling we were bred to, and we know not how else to live,—we are content, and some way constrained, to keep up the forms we found in use, and maintain them that they may maintain us.

5. Yet when it shall be found, as upon strict inquiry it cannot but be, that the foundations of religion are more firm than those of heaven and earth, how dismal will it be to have "preached to others and ourselves to be cast away!"[1] For as by loose, licentious walking, we hazard other men's souls, which we should endeavour to save; so we more certainly lose our own. God may save them some other way, and by other, more apt instruments; but we have little reason to expect that we shall save our own, either while we design it not, (as if we were to be saved by chance,) or, much less, if we counteract any such design: which we may, most destructively, by that single instance which the apostle, in that last-mentioned place, refers to; an indulged intemperance, or not keeping our bodies in subjection—in servitude, or in a serviceable temper, as the word δουλαγωγεῖν imports; to subdue them into the state of servants; wherein rather than fail, one would use the severity which this other word ὑπωπιάζειν there signifies. It is plain, that "if we live after the flesh we must die."[2] There is one law for ministers and people: and it is only by the Spirit we are so to mortify the deeds of the flesh that we may live. How dismal when a minister's own breath poisons him! when the very gospel which he preaches is a deadly odour to himself[3]! How horrid when a shepherd is the leader of the Epicurean herd!

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [2] Rom. viii. 13. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 16. ὀσμή.

6. But if, by neglecting visibly the gospel way of saving himself, he not only hazard, but actually destroy other men's souls, together with his own, he then perishes under a much heavier load of guilt than another man can, that was not under his obligations. As his obligation was double, so is his guilt. When sinful, vicious inclination hath depraved his mind, put out the eye of his practical understanding,—so that the blind leads the blind,—both fall into the ditch; but he falls much the deeper, having the other's destruction charged upon him together with his own. Such teachers as bind heavy burdens for others, which they will not touch, fall under an aggravated woe: and the case is the same with them that prepare and set before their hearers the most nutritive and delectable fare, which they will not taste. And for that reason, perhaps, the people will not feed on them, because the preachers themselves too evidently appear to have no taste or relish of them.

II. The ministers of Christ ought to conjoin the serious design and earnest endeavour of saving them that hear them, with the design and endeavour of saving themselves. They are not to be so bound up within themselves as only to mind their own things, though of this most noble kind.

1. The law of nature obliges them to it, which extends its obligation as far as human nature extends. And must therefore include them with the rest of mankind under the same common notion; namely, them who are ministers, not as they are such,—for nature hath not made them ministers,—but as they are men; whom the royal law, mentioned before, requires to love their neighbour as themselves; and therefore to seek another's felicity, not before, but as, their own. We are taught to count it an unnatural barbarity, when we see any pressed and pinched by bodily wants and miseries, to hide ourselves from our own flesh:[1] how much more, if we see immortal souls in danger to be lost and perish, that are of the same make and capacity with our own!

[1] Isaiah lviii. 7.

2. The law of Christ, as such, obliges Christians to the same thing: which is not, in this instance, therefore a diverse law, but hath a different stamp and impress, as being the law of the kingdom of God in Christ. We are to bear one another's burdens, so fulfilling the law of Christ.[1] What so weighty a burden can there be upon any man as this, the importance of his eternal salvation? and which is plainly here referred to, when we are required to endeavour the restoring of such as have been overtaken, and lapsed into sin, by which the precious soul is hurt and endangered: should they be left to sink under such a burden? Christians are elsewhere required to have compassion on such as they see in such danger,—"to save them with fear, and pull them as firebrands out of the fire."[2] These are obligations common to ministers with others. But,

3. The law of their own office lays upon them an obligation peculiar, as such, to themselves. What serves their office for, but this, as the principal end and design of it? What is it meant for, but to gather in souls to Christ, and confirm them in him? because "there is salvation in no other; nor is there any other name given among men, by which any can be saved."[3] They are the messengers of the glad tidings of peace. Their business is so well known, even in hell itself, that a spirit from thence speaks it out, "These are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation,"—that is, to human creatures, of whom the possessed person was one.[4]

4. They are obliged by the example of their blessed Master, our Lord Jesus himself, the primary Saviour by office; whom they are both to imitate and to serve in this merciful design. Christians are so far to imitate them, as they do Christ,[5]—which implies their obligation to imitate him, as the word μιμηταὶ, there used, signifies. The great salvation, which none that neglect, can escape vengeance,

[1] Gal. vi. 2. [2] Jude 23. [3] Acts iv. 12.
[4] Acts xvi. 17. [5] 1 Cor. xi. 1.

began to be spoken by the Lord himself, then by them that heard him,—and so on, by others that succeed in the same office. This is following Christ in the way of imitation, as in the mentioned place. And we are required to have "the same mind in us, which was in Christ,"[1] and are told wherein;[2]—which read over at leisure, and consider what was that deep humiliation and suffering for, but the salvation of souls? And consider that this is said, as to the saints at Philippi, so particularly to the bishops and deacons there: which shows their common and their special obligation both together. And now, can we behold with what compassions and in what agonies, even unto blood, our blessed Lord pursued this design, and not feel a constraint in our spirits, in our lower sphere and capacity, to serve it also to our uttermost?

5. They are obliged by the peculiar advantages they have for this work, and those they expect by it.

i. They have special advantages for it from their very calling, being separated to the gospel, taken off from other business, to give themselves (as in this context) wholly to this. They are supposed therefore to know more of the concernments of souls; of the terrors of the Lord,[3] whence, therefore, they are to persuade men; of the nature of sin, and how it entangles men's spirits; of the wiles of Satan, and how he waits for advantages to destroy them; of the foundations of religion, and by what arts they are endeavoured to be subverted or shaken, and by what means and methods they are to be demonstrated or established; of the mysteries of the gospel of Christ, and how they are to be unfolded;—to have more special assistances from heaven in their work, according as they faithfully mind it; Christ's promised presence therein, even to the end. These are talents, with others tending to the obtaining of these, which they are to be accountable for. And hereby they are strongly obliged, with their own, to intend earnestly the salvation of other men's souls.

[1] Phil. ii. 5. [2] Ver. 6—8. [3] 2 Cor. v. 11.

ii. They expect great advantages by it: that since nothing is more grateful to our Lord Christ than the progress of this saving work, he will bountifully reward them that faithfully serve him in it: that if they be "steadfast and immovable, abounding in this work of the Lord," (as he hath not a greater, now in doing, in this world,) "their labour in him shall not be in vain." They shall hear from him; "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." If they "turn many to righteousness" —or endeavour it with sincere minds—"they shall shine as stars in the firmament." And in the meantime, the honour and the pleasure of serving that mighty Redeemer, and lover of souls, in so glorious a design, have in them a very excellent reward; and which cannot but be esteemed such by a right mind.

6. They are obliged by the exigency of their own case. They cannot, as that is stated, neglect the design of saving other men's souls, without forfeiting their own. If they warn them not, over whom as watchmen they are set, they perish, but their blood will be required at their hands. It is a mighty trust they stand charged with, which if they discharge not, they are liable to accusation and condemnation, as false and faithless servants; perfidious to the souls of men; traitorous to the King of kings,—whose interest they will have betrayed, being his agents and ministers in his kingdom of grace; about the prosperous state of which kingdom, with the successful progress of the affairs of it, he is most deeply concerned.

And now from this conjunct consideration of these two great ends, which a minister of Christ is to propound to himself, I might proceed to consider them severally and apart; but this the case doth not require, it being easy to sever what hath been said to the one and the other; nor do our limits allow it.

We therefore go on to the more necessary use of the whole. To this purpose we collect,

1. That this world is universally in a very miserable

state. For it is the business of Christ's ministers, to endeavour both the salvation of them that hear them, and their own.

i. The salvation of them that hear them. This is very indefinite; let who will be the hearers, they are supposed to be such as need to be saved. The object of their ministry is all nations, and every creature; namely, that is or shall be capable of being taught the way of salvation. Therefore all nations are deluged by the destructive evils from which they are to be saved; and the world is everywhere inhabited by miserable creatures. We are told, "that sin and death have passed upon all men,"[1] and all the ends of the earth are invited to look unto God in Christ, (as the application of this context shows,[2]) that they may be saved.[3] Whereas therefore the ministers of the gospel of salvation, wheresoever they can obtain to be heard, are to endeavour the salvation of their hearers; it shows they can speak to none who stand not in need of saving mercy.

ii. And that they are also to save themselves as well as them that hear them, more fully shows the absolute universality of the ruin that hath befallen this world; that there are among men none to be found that may be employed in saving others, but who are of the lost themselves; and so far drowned in the common deluge of perdition and destruction as to need *his* help, as well as the rest, "who came to seek and save them who are lost;" and to stretch out to him craving hands, with that crying voice, "Lord, save us, we perish."

2. The common stupidity of this wretched world is hereupon most observable and amazing, that so few such cries are sent up to heaven! Men are involved in a common ruin, overtures are made to them of a common salvation, but they are in reference hereto destitute of common sense; that is, of such sense as is common in less important cases. Their misery lies in their having lost God; but little do they

[1] Rom. v. 12. [2] Phil. ii. [3] Isaiah xlv. 22.

apprehend this loss. Amidst their other miseries, they cry out when some that are mightier oppress others; but none says, "Where is God my maker?"[1] "The Lord looketh down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if any will understand, and seek after God; but they are every one gone back," or are in an averse posture; "none doeth" *this* "good, no, not one:"[2] none, till he give an effectual touch to their drowsy spirits, and say, inwardly and vitally, to their hearts, "Seek ye my face," so as to make their hearts answer, "Thy face Lord, will we seek."[3] Preventing grace doth this; otherwise they feel no need of God, they miss him not, are content to be without him in the world; yea, say to him, "Depart from us." Distance from him is chosen and desired,—from him whose offspring we are, who is the Father of spirits, their parent, their life, their blessedness; of whom they are, and to whom if they tend not, they cannot but be miserable. It is the salvation of the soul that is the end of faith;[4] that faith by which we are to come to God, believing that he is, and will be the "rewarder of them that diligently seek him:" being redeemed to God by the blood of his Son,[5]— "who suffered once, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God,"[6] and who upon his suffering intercedes for the same purpose; and "is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, because he ever lives to make intercession for them." But this salvation of the soul, this coming to God, or redemption by Christ, and his intercession thereupon, who looks after? Neither the end, the salvation of their souls, coming back to God, nor his method for attaining this end, are regarded, or so much as thought on. To have this flesh saved from anything that is grievous to it, every one covets, and endeavours in vain; it must, however, rot in the dust, and be, in the meantime, a prey to worms: its own "father, mother, and sister," will devour it.[7] The Father of their spirits would save and satisfy them, but him they shun, and will not know.

[1] Job xxxv. 9, 10. [2] Ps. xiv. and liii. [3] Ps. xxvii. 8.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 9. [5] Rev. v. 9. [6] 1 Pet. iii. 18. [7] Job xvii. 14.

Who that observes how men spend their days,—even under the gospel, which makes their time "a day of grace," wherein they should be working out their salvation,—can think they have any concern to be saved? Their life is continual trifling, some pass their days in mirth and jollity; doth this signify any sense of misery, or fear of perishing, and that destruction from the Almighty is a terror to them? These are not more idle, than others are idly busy to get estates and a name on earth; but what is this to their being saved? They are liable to the common more sensible miseries of life, and they are without God; but this is no misery with them. This misery is their element, and burdens them not. Were their present case and future danger, in this respect, apprehended and felt, how full of outcries would this world be! 'Oh we are lost and perishing!' Such cries would ring through the earth and pierce heaven! But the same carnality that is death,[1] and makes them miserable, makes them stupid too, and insensible of their misery. And are these *reasonable* souls, intelligent, immortal minds and spirits, that are thus stupified? turned into such clods and stones? O deplorable case! Methinks such an office set up in the world, of men that are to save their own and other men's souls, should make them consider, and bethink themselves, What is it for? It must have had an original, and so it hath a divine aspect, a taste of heaven upon it; and must have an end suitable to the wisdom and grace of Heaven, which claims to be entertained otherwise than with neglect and contempt! And indeed this leads to take notice more expressly, in a further inference,

3. That there is a saving design on foot in the world, set on foot by the blessed God himself. Otherwise in so great a ruin as is come upon this wretched world, what could it signify, for any man to offer at saving either himself or others? How vain an attempt were it for any man, out of so deep and horrid a gulf of impurity, misery, darkness, and

[1] Rom. viii. 6.

death, to think of lifting up himself and of plucking up others, as high as heaven! This intimation carries hope with it. It is a voice from heaven to such as are so employed as Timothy was, 'Oh save thyself, and as many as thou canst besides.' It takes away all pretence for despair; God puts not men upon vain attempts. A lively hope ought to spring from hence. "And we are saved by hope,"[1]—as without hope no man would ever design for salvation, or anything else. Hope is the engine that moves the world, keeps the intelligent part of it in action everywhere. No man could rationally stir in pursuit of any design whereof he despaired. But as to other designs men's hopes are commonly self-sprung, and end in shame. But when one can say, 'Lord, thy word hath caused me to hope; thou hast put me upon aiming to be saved, and to save others'; it speaks this to be a just and a hopeful undertaking. 'I will therefore set about working out my own salvation, (and with my own, other men's, as far as is within my compass,) expecting He will graciously set in with me, and work in order hereto, to will and to do of His own good pleasure, without which all mine will be lost labour.'

4. We further collect, That the blessed God is most intent upon this design. That which this supposes, and that which it imports, speaks him intent. It supposes he hath appointed a sovereign Saviour set over this work; otherwise there could be none subordinate. It imports he hath settled an office on purpose; made it some men's special business, to intend—as every one ought—his own salvation, and withal to give himself up to this great work, the saving all he can. An office set up for the saving of souls ought to be a great thing in our eyes; and it is a standing testimony for God, how willing he is men should come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.

5. They that bear this office should be highly honoured for their work's sake. For how glorious an employment is it to

[1] Rom. viii. 24.

be instrumental to salvation; to be in any kind saviours! I could tell you of some great princes in the pagan world, that to their other splendid titles have had the addition of *Soter*, 'a Saviour,'—as to some others, the Destroyer of Cities has been given as a name of reproach. And you do know who hath the name of Apollyon, or Abaddon.[1]

6. It highly magnifies the wisdom, power, and sovereignty of God, that he can and will make use of so mean instruments for so high and glorious a purpose. For what end and purpose can be greater than the recovery and salvation of souls so deformed, miserable, and lost, as the souls of men universally were? And what instruments could be meaner or more vile, than such as needed to be saved themselves, with the same salvation? That God should make use of them who were darkness,[2] to enlighten the world;[3] of such as were but sinful flesh,[4] to be able ministers of the Spirit;[5] of such as had minds that were enmity against God,[6] to reconcile men to himself;[7] these are some of the wonders he works among the children of men;—when he hath converted some, to use them, first for the converting of others, and then for the strengthening of their converted brethren.

7. The ministers of Christ are to be examples to them over whom they are set. They are to be so in the beginning of their course, in their first turn to God, though then in a more passive sense: "That I might be a pattern," etc., saith the apostle;[8] and in their after course, as in this context:[9] "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation," etc. They must be leaders in the whole way of salvation, from first to last.

8. Pride in the ministers of the gospel, and in them that live under a gospel ministry, is a most monstrous absurdity: for what are we, all of us, but a company of wretched creatures, just perishing, and only (at the best) but in the way of being saved? What have such to be proud of?

[1] Rev. ix. 11.
[2] Eph. v. 8.
[3] Matt. v. 14.
[4] John iii. 6.
[5] 2 Cor. iii. 6.
[6] Rom. viii. 7.
[7] 2 Cor. v. 20.
[8] 1 Tim. i. 16.
[9] 1 Tim. iv. 12.

9. Both Christ's ministers and their flocks, are under the greatest obligation imaginable unto union. For their case is one and the same; their miseries were the same, their dangers the same. They must all have the same Saviour, the same way of salvation, and the same end; the same state of salvation, which all the 'nations of the saved' are to be brought to at last.[1]

10. It is an unquestionable thing, that salvation is to be designed for by all sorts. Ministers must aim to save themselves and their hearers. And is the minister to design his people's salvation, and not they their own? They have mean thoughts of salvation that stumble here, as if they were only to be saved from hell-flames! But to be saved from sin that makes us unlike God; to have his image and his love perfected in us; to be with the rest of the elect, partakers of salvation, with eternal glory, is that mean?[2]

11. The ministers of the gospel must, some time or other, be taken away from their work. It is *time*, a limited duration, within which their work and business lie, for the saving themselves and those that hear them. They are to save themselves. This end they are to pursue; and it must some time be attained. They are not always to labour, and never rest: some time they are to receive the fruit of this their labour, "and the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls." As more time passes, their salvation draws nearer than when they believed; they are not always to be in saving, and never saved. In mercy to them, God will translate them; and may it not be in judgment to many, whom they earnestly laboured to save, but who rejected their counsels, and strove against their own salvation! That they may not always labour in vain for themselves, and because they have laboured in vain for many others, they must be withdrawn from their hard and toilsome labour, and enter into rest.

12. The loss is great and grievous beyond all expression, above all our lamentation, when such are taken away as have

[1] Rev. xxi. 24. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 10.

made it their business to "save themselves and those that heard them." In their endeavour to save themselves, they have been great examples; in their endeavour to save others, they may have been great instruments of much saving good to many a soul. How few are they that drive such designs! How fast doth their number decrease! How fitly may we take up that of the psalmist, when "the godly man ceaseth," and "the faithful fail from among the children of men!" And what could be said with greater pathos,[1] 'Help, Lord:' as in a common ruin,—'Help, help, for God's sake; help, Lord, help!' My friends, are you not sensible you have lost such a one, even while you are not yet saved, while you yet need to be working out your salvation? The effectually called, it is true, are saved:[2] "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling." And (which is in substance the same thing) the regenerate are saved: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."[3] But if this were the case with you all, how much yet remains to be done, in order to your full and consummate salvation! You have yet mighty difficulties to overcome; a body of death, which you are not yet delivered from. For are not these some of your groans, in reference to it, 'O who shall deliver us?' A world full of troubles and snares; "your adversary the devil, that goes about seeking whom he may devour;" all the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness, that you are to contend with, and with whom you are to dispute every step of your way to heaven; —and do you not need such a leader in that way? And if any are fallen into drowsy slumbers, do you not need his awakening ministry? If dead, how often hath the blessed Spirit breathed life into you, by his quickening ministry! How often hath God used him to enlighten you, when you have been in the dark; to clear up the great doctrines of the gospel, when you have not distinctly understood them; to

[1] Ps. xii. 1. [2] 2 Tim. i. 9. [3] Tit. iii. 5.

establish you in the faith, when you have wavered; to resolve you in matters of practice, when you have been in doubt; to encourage you in your fears and faintings, to comfort you in your sadness and sorrows! I wonder not that there are many weeping eyes, and should much wonder if there be not many aching, trembling hearts among you, for what you have lost, and from an apprehension how hard and almost hopeless it is, your loss should be soon or equally supplied.

He was long in preparing and forming to be what he was, when you lost him. His station among you in this neighbourhood, when first he undertook the pastoral charge of this church, over which the Holy Ghost made him overseer, required a man of as much wisdom and grace as any such station could well be supposed to do; considering how numerous, how intelligent, and well instructed a people, he was to take the care of. I well remember that about three or four and forty years ago, being desired to give some help, on a Lord's day, to that eminent servant of Christ, Mr. Greenhill, whose praise is still in all the churches, I then first heard him preach: and, if my memory fail not, he had about that time in hand some part of that excellent discourse of the 'Almost Christian.' I had then the opportunity of beginning an acquaintance with him. His excellent good natural parts, his ingenuous education, his industry, his early labours in preaching the gospel of Christ in his native country, in the city, and in this place; his conjunction and society, for some years, with that excellent servant of God before named; above all, the gracious assistances he had from heaven; gave him great advantages to be "a minister of Christ, approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." And his multiplied years, unto the seventieth, with the continual addition thereby to the rich treasury of his experiences, still improved him more and more: so that there being no decay of his natural endowments, and a continual increase of his supernatural, you had the best of him at last; whereby indeed, your loss was the greater,—but your obligation was also the greater, that God

continued to you the enjoyment of him so long, and that in a serviceable state. But when he could be no longer serviceable in his stated, delightful work, it was by the decay not of the inward, but the outward man; so that when he could preach to you and converse with you no longer, he could earnestly and fervently pray for you to the end. And God did not afflict you by leaving long among you only the shadow, the outside of the man, and of such a man!

He took little pleasure in embroiling himself or his hearers in needless and fruitless controversies. The great, substantial doctrines of the gospel were his principal study and delight; such as lay nearest the vitals and the very heart of religion and godliness, and most directly tending to the saving them that heard him. The subjects which he chose to insist upon from time to time in the course of his ministry, showed, as to this, his spirit and design. Having formed from the Holy Scriptures that scheme of thoughts which satisfied him, and gave him a clear ground whereupon to preach the gospel with an unrecoiling heart, he loved not to discompose it; his judgment in things which had that reference, being constantly moderate and unexceptionably sound, remote from rigorous and indefensible extremities on the one hand and the other. Hereupon he drove at his mark without diversion; not so much aiming to proselyte souls to a party as to Christ, and to engage men, as much as in him lay, to be sound and thorough Christians. Hitherto tended his sermons from year to year. The great subject he had in hand, and which he left unfinished, when God took him off from his public work, was manifestly pointed this way; namely, of the covenant of God in Christ. And his annual course of preaching a sermon on May day, to young men, had the same manifest scope and aim; with which his public labours were concluded,—God so ordering it, that his last sermon was this year on that day.

His judgment in reference to matters of church order was for union and communion of all visible Christians; namely, of such as did visibly "hold the head," as to the principal *credenda* and *agenda* of Christianity, the great things belonging

to the faith and practice of a Christian; so as nothing be made necessary to Christian communion but what Christ hath made necessary, or what is indeed necessary to one's being a Christian. What he publicly assayed to this purpose, the world knows; and many more private endeavours and strugglings of his for such a union, I have not been unacquainted with: the unsuccessfulness of which endeavours, he said, not long before his last confinement, he thought would break his heart;—he having openly, among divers persons and with great earnestness, some time before expressed his consent to some proposals, which if the parties concerned had agreed in the desire of the thing itself, must unavoidably have inferred such a union without prejudice to their principles, and on such terms as must have extended it much further; else it had signified little. But this must be effected, as is too apparent, not by mere human endeavour, but by an Almighty Spirit poured forth; which, after we have suffered awhile, shall καταρτίσαι, put us into joint, and make every joint know its place in the body;[1] shall conquer private interests and inclinations, and overawe men's hearts by the authority of the divine law,—which now, how express soever it is, little availeth against such prepossessions. Till then, Christianity will be among us a languishing, withering thing. When the season comes of such an effusion of the Spirit from on high, there will be no parties: and amidst the wilderness desolation that cannot but be till that season comes, it matters little, and signifies to me scarce one straw, what party of us is uppermost: the most righteous, as they may be vogued, will be but as briars and scratching thorns; and it is better to suffer by such, than be of them.

In the meantime, it is a mark of God's heavy displeasure, when persons of so healing spirits are taken away; and if it awaken any of us, *that* will tend to prepare us for the effects of it: which preparation seems a thing more to be hoped than prevention.

[1] 1 Pet. v. 10.

But this worthy servant of Christ sees not the woful day, whatever of it he might foresee. His removal makes to many, indeed, a woful day, and that all about him did long foresee. He was long languishing, and even dying daily: but amidst surrounding death, as a relation told me, there was no appearance of any the least cloud upon his spirit, that obscured the evidences of his title to a blessed eternity. Being asked how he did, he said, 'Going home, as every honest man ought, when his work is done.' He was much in admiring God's mercies under his afflicting hand, saying, 'Everything on this side hell is mercy:' that 'the mercies he received were greater than his burdens, though in themselves grievous:' that he rested upon that promise, 'that his Father would lay no more upon him than he would enable him to bear:' that 'he expected to be saved only by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him.' Though he well understood,—as I had sufficient reason to know,—that Christ's righteousness is never imputed to any, but where, if the subject be capable, there is an inherent righteousness also; *he said* '*that* is no cause of our salvation, but the character of the saved.'—And having before precautioned some as were about him not to be surprised if he went away suddenly, he repeated the ejaculation, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" and renewing the former caution by saying, "Remember what I said before," as he sat in his chair, with all possible composure he bowed his head, and without sigh or motion expired in a moment. The sighing part he left to others that stay behind: and I do even feel the sorrows of his most afflicted family, his mournful widow, his sorrowing sons and daughters, his destitute church; with all others that got good, or might have done, by his quickening, spiritful, piercing ministry, or had the advantage and satisfaction of his acquaintance and converse.

Your grief cannot but be measured by your love; and your love by his in the several kinds and objects of it: his conjugal, paternal, pastoral, friendly love, as he was an affectionate husband, a tender father, a vigilant pastor, and a pleasant friend. But withal, let your consolations be measured

by the proper grounds thereof. It is a most improper, irrational, unchristian way of being comforted in such a case, only to let time wear away our sorrows. It is but a negative, a heathenish, yea a worse than heathenish method of receiving comfort; for I have observed it to be animadverted on, as an intolerable absurdity, by some among the heathens,—that time should work that cure of grief and sorrow, which reason and prudence work not. And thus it is plain we shall be relieved, not by holy thoughts, but by not thinking! So it may in time be forgotten, that ever such a man as Mr. Mead was minister in Stepney. And what is this to Christian consolation?

But we need not wander from the text for a positive and a solid ground of comfort. Remember it was his business to save himself, and those that heard him. As you have no doubt of his salvation, which I believe none of you have, make sure of your own. "Put on, with the breastplate of faith and love, that helmet, the hope of salvation." You are "of the day; watch and be sober, as those that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ."[1] And then consider (as I doubt not many a soul will bless God for him for ever) how glorious a sight it will be to see him one day appear in the head of a numerous company of saved ones; and say,—as a subordinate parent in the apostle's sense,—"Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me."[2]

In conclusion: For you of his dear and beloved flock, this may be directive to you as well as consolatory. Would you have a pastor after God's heart? Put yourselves under the conduct, as much as in you is, of such a pastor as you apprehend will be intent, in all his ministrations, upon this double end,—"to save himself and them that hear him." "And labour to be perfect, be of one mind, and live in peace, so the God of love and peace shall be with you."[3] And remember him as one that hath had the rule over you, and hath spoken to

[1] 1 Thess. v. 7—9. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 15. [3] 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

you the word of the Lord; and follow the faith of such, considering the end of their conversation; and that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. As you change pastors you will not need to change Christs, so as to have one yesterday, another to-day, and a third to-morrow. Pastors under the gospel, as well as priests under the law, "were many, because of death; but our blessed Lord, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."[1] Therefore do you never think of another Christ, as *their* doubt was, *who are referred to in* Matthew;[2] but cleave to this your great Lord with purpose of heart, till he give you at last an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom.

Let his mournful relatives, and all of you to whom he was dear, consider what our Lord offered as matter of consolation in the most trying case of this kind that ever could occur to poor mortals; that is, when he himself was to be taken away from his sorrowing family and followers. It is but "a little while;" as much as to say, my 'words have a plain meaning,' "A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. Ye now therefore have sorrow, but your sorrow will be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you."[3]

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will: working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

[1] Heb. vii. 23, 24. [2] Ch. xi. 3. [3] John xvi. 17—20, 22.

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

THAT FAITHFUL, LEARNED, AND MOST WORTHY MINISTER
OF THE GOSPEL,

THE REV. PETER VINK, B.D.,

WHO DECEASED SEPTEMBER 6, 1702.

TO THE TRULY PIOUS

MRS. MARY VINK, RELICT OF THE DECEASED.

My dear and honoured Sister,

The relation I stand in to you, by that union which some years since the good providence of God hath brought about between our families, obliges me, besides what I owe you upon the common Christian account, to partake with you in your sorrows for this late afflicting loss; as I have, according to my measure, in the satisfaction of enjoying so pleasant and delectable a relative and friend. And I would not only bear my own much lighter part of this burden, but (if I knew how) ease and lighten your part. It ought to do much towards it—by helping you to poise and balance your burden—to put you in mind, that you have a greater and nearer relation left. Your Maker is your husband: God all-sufficient, in whom is immense fulness; who can be always present, and most intimately converse with your spirit; who never dies, and to whom your relation is eternal:—which are all, things not agreeable or possible to any earthly relative. This God is to be your God for ever and ever, and your guide unto the death; even in this wilderness, on this side death, where we most need a guide. Nor hath your most tender deceased consort otherwise left you alone. He hath left you with an observant son and his yoke-fellow, with a dear and only brother, that, it is to be hoped, will severally be found full of dutiful and brotherly affection towards

you. And you have genuine relatives and branches remaining to you, daughter and daughter's children, that through God's goodness may be continuing and growing comforts to you.

And this season of your separation from so pleasant a companion and guide of your life, will be of no long continuance. It should occasion you to intermingle thanksgivings with lamentations, that your union and enjoyment continued so long; and for what remains, the time is short. Therefore, they that lose such relations, "are to weep as if they wept not—remembering that the fashion of this world passeth away." Especially it ought to be considered, that such a sad parting will be recompensed by the most joyful meeting; when they that "have slept in Jesus, God will bring with him;" and the survivors, at that day, "be caught up into the clouds, to meet" their Redeemer and, no doubt, the redeemed "in the air, and so be for ever with the Lord." Wherefore let us comfort ourselves and each other with these words; which have a fulness in them richly sufficient for you, and for,

My dear Sister,

Your sincerely affectionate, and

Very respectful Brother,

JOHN HOWE.

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR THAT FAITHFUL, LEARNED, AND MOST WORTHY MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL,

THE REV. PETER VINK, B.D.

ACTS V. 20.

"GO, STAND AND SPEAK IN THE TEMPLE TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

THE present speaker in this text is an angel of God; one of those blessed spirits from among "the principalities and powers in heavenly places," who greatly delight,—as you have lately heard,[1] and I hope are, God willing, further to hear,—to be concerned about the affairs of God's church on earth: so that we depart not much from our former subject in diverting to this. But whereas the speaker was an immortal angel, and the subject spoken of, words of life,—these, you may think, are things very remote from the design of a funeral discourse. Yet you are withal to consider, that the persons spoken unto were mortal men; Peter, with the rest of the apostles, whose lives were in jeopardy every hour. That they are so mentioned in this history, "Peter, and the *rest* of the apostles;" and—what we find expressly recorded of him besides—that it was endeavoured the diseased might be put under his shadow passing by; and that he afterwards in this chapter is *only* named, (with the addition, "the other apostles,") making their defence, being convened before the

[1] Having a discourse in hand about this time, on Eph. iii. 10: "To the intent that now unto the principalities," etc.

council,[1] shows that Peter was more eminently active, vigorous, forward, and zealous in the work of Christ: but far from the affectation of principality over the rest. Quite another consideration may well be understood to have urged him, and which our Lord seems to refer to, when he said, "Go, tell my disciples, and Peter." But he, with the rest, we are sure, were all mortals alike; and *they* were also from time to time assemblies of mortals that they were directed to speak unto, the words of life.

And, my friends, the very name of life cannot but have a grateful pleasant sound to them that dwell in the midst of deaths; to them that find the dark and dismal shadow of death continually spread over the whole region which they inhabit. When they find that death, in all its more gloomy appearances, hath so general a power over ministers and people, preachers and them that were to be preached unto; how pleasant is the mention of life, and such a life as surmounts, as exceeds the sphere where any death can come; a sphere by itself all full of vitality, and in which death, or any shadow of death, can never find place! To be told of such a life, amidst surrounding deaths, cannot but be a pleasant and grateful thing to them that have sense enough in reference to their present case, and any faith in reference to the future. Indeed the power of death appears so much the more absolute and its commission is seen to be of so much the greater amplitude and extensiveness, that it equally reaches to preachers and hearers; must equally reach such men as these apostles were, and all the people they were to speak to, the "words of this life." But so much the higher and more glorious are the triumphs of that "life," the "words" whereof are here mentioned. For it is evident these words do mean and intend a life, into which everything of death and mortality is to be swallowed up: and therefore though death do stop the breath of preachers and the ears of hearers, it can never prevail against that word in

[1] Acts v. 29.

in which this life is wont to breathe. For though "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; the grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever, that word which by the gospel is preached unto you."[1]

This indeed was an ancient and very eminent minister of the word of life, whose decease and death occasions this solemnity and this discourse, now at this time. And it ought to please us so much the more, that while we are now to consider and lament the death of such a preacher, the word he was wont to preach shall never die; and that we are to consider at the same time, the life which such words do both concern and cause, is finally victorious over death in all the kinds and forms of it; "a life hid with Christ in God;" whereof He is the root and original, who avowed himself to be "the resurrection and the life;" and hath assured the partakers of this life, whether preachers or hearers, that "when He who is their life shall appear, they shall also appear with Him in glory."[2] But so vain were the opposers of the preaching "the words of this life,"—the obdurate, infidel Jews,—that they thought to shut it up and the preachers of it, within the walls of a prison; for that was the case here. A sort of men full of malignity and bitterness; especially, as you read in the context, those of the sect of the Sadducees, who were the prevailing party at that time in their Sanhedrim, who believed nothing of a life to come, and had drawn in the high priest to be on their side; and who, as we read in the foregoing chapter,[3] "with the high priest, were grieved"—pained as the word signifies—"that they (namely, Peter and John, though the former was orator) preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead;"—these are, as they were before, the active, industrious instruments to restrain the preachers, and suppress the preaching the words of this life: they, as is said above, filled with indignation, laid hands on the apostles, threw them into the common

[1] 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. [2] Col. iii. 3, 4. [3] Acts iv. 1, 2.

prison, and there they think them and their word securely enclosed and shut up together, that the world should never hear more of them. And did ever malice more befool itself? Could spite ever act or attempt a part more ridiculously absurd? Did they think to imprison celestial light, to bury immortal life? Heaven derides their attempt, and exposes them to be derided. For as we are next told, "The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors,"—why made they not him their prisoner too?—"and brought them forth, and said, (as follows in the text,) Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." These two things are here very plain:

First. That by this life is meant a peculiar sort of life; this life, τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης, this same life, that was so highly predicated and cried up at that time, so that no one could be in doubt what kind of life it was. It is true, out of those circumstances, when we use the phrase of 'this life,' we ordinarily refer to the common affairs of this *present* life. But that it cannot be so understood here is most evident: the whole business under present consideration had quite another reference. The apostles had no controversy with the rulers of the Jews about the affairs of this world, or of the best way of living a few days on earth; but what was the surest way of living for ever; and whether believing on Christ as the Messiah, "He that was to come," were not that way. Their only contest with the people was (as his own was, while he was yet among them) that they would "not come to him that they might have life." So here, the angel of the Lord commanding these servants and apostles of his to preach the words of *this* life; using the demonstrative term ταύτης, this same life, this way of living, or obtaining life, now so much disputed, and which began to make so great a noise in the world; cried up by some, decried by others:—this sufficiently distinguished it. There were more obscure notices of it before, but now it was more clearly revealed and more loudly to be spoken out. The manner of expression signifies it to be a peculiar and more excellent sort of life, very diverse

from, and far transcending, what is common to men; nor leaves us in any doubt of the angel's meaning.

Secondly. That the words of this life must necessarily mean the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; whereof these were the ministers and apostles, bound by special office to diffuse to their uttermost this life and the words of it. Whence, therefore, for our own instruction, we may take up this twofold observation: That the gospel contains, or is composed and made up of, words of a peculiar and most excellent and noble kind of life: That it is the part of the ministers of this gospel, even by angelical suffrage and determination, as they have opportunity, to publish such words; that is, to preach this gospel. In speaking to these two conjunctly, I shall particularly insist on these four heads, namely,

I. To show how peculiar and how excellent a sort of life this is.

II. To show you how usually and fitly the gospel is so paraphrased, by the word or words of life, and of such a life.

III. To show you, that it cannot but be the part of the ministers of this gospel, to preach the words of this life.

IV. We shall also take the incidental occasion of observing to you and insisting briefly on it, that they have the very suffrage of the angels of God to that purpose, that it is their part and business to preach the words of this life: and so shall make use of all.

I. We are to show the peculiar excellency of this life. That it is a peculiar sort of life, we have already noted from the angel's speaking so distinctively of it; calling it this life, this same life,—that is now everywhere so much spoken of, that is the matter of present discourse and of inquiry at this time. And that it is a most excellent, a most noble kind of life, the expression itself also doth not obscurely point out to us,—that it is called "this life," κατ' ἐξοχήν; life in the highest and most eminent sense. Never talk of this shadow, this dream of life, we are now passing through, but "speak to the people the words of this life;" this is a life worth

speaking of. And the excellencies of it will appear in these several respects; as,

1. That it is most manifestly divine life, and not, at the common rate, as *all* life is from God; but as it not only proceeds from God, but resembles him, bears his peculiar impress upon it; upon which account it is called the life of God, the divine life, in Eph. iv. 18, where the apostle, lamenting the sad and dismal state of the Gentile world, saith, that "they were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, and the blindness of their hearts." It is, in a very special sense, a God-breathed life: not as the natural life and soul of man were breathed at first from God; but as there was a peculiar divinity in this life, not only as coming from him, but as having in it a chosen dependence on him and tendency towards him, by its own very essence, which the life of the soul of man at first had not. For if a voluntary dependence on God and tendency towards him had been essential to the natural life of a man's soul, it had been impossible they should ever have been lost. Such a posture Godward was agreeable and connatural, not essential. But it now is proper and peculiar to this life,—though still not essential, as it never was, but more deeply fixed in the soul by grace than it was at first by nature,—to tend to God, as it is by faith derived from him, (as is expressed, "the just shall live by faith;"[1] and "alive to God,"[2]) as by love it works towards him. "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."[3] The soul was never otherwise dead, than it was dead towards God; and now, while in the present sense it lives, it lives by and to him: it being the steady, habitual determination of the soul Godward, as its first and last, both in itself and in the design of its implantation. And so *this life* is the imprinted image of the life of God himself, so far as the condition of a creature can admit; that is, that as God lives of and to

[1] Hab. ii. 4; Heb. x. 38. [2] Rom. vi. 11.
[3] Gal. v. 6; and Gal. ii. 19.

himself, the soul by this life, lives not in a merely natural, (which is common to all creatures,) but in an apprehended and designed dependence on God and subordination to him.

2. It is a Christian, as well as a divine life; a life that comes from God, not as Creator only, (as all life, and as the life of our soul particularly at first did, with its very being, which involves life in itself;) but a life that comes from Christ, as our Redeemer, as God-man and Mediator betwixt God and man, whereof he is the immediate author, and which he procured by his own death and by his resurrection from the dead, wherein we partake with him, when we live this life: "I am crucified with Christ," saith the apostle, "nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[1] "To me to live is Christ."[2] He is the author and fountain, as well as the end of this life. It is a life owing to the Redeemer dying: "He bare our sins, that we might live unto righteousness."[3] And we are taught, upon his dying, mentioned before, "to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."[4] And he is therefore said to be the immediate donor of this life:[5] "And I am come," saith he, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."[6] The beginning and improvements of this life, to perfect plenitude, are all from him; and it is therefore said to be "a life hid with Christ in God."[7] He is said to be their life:[8] by all which Christ is signified to be the author and giver of this life. And he is as expressly said to be the end of it; his love in dying for us, "constraining us no more to live to ourselves, but to him, who died for us, and rose again." To which purpose are the words in Romans xiv.[9] Again,

3. It is a pure and holy life, such as, wheresoever it is, cannot suffer a man's soul customarily to mingle with the impurities and pollutions of this world. It is a life that

[1] Gal. ii. 20. [2] Phil. i. 21. [3] 1 Pet. ii. 24.
[4] Rom. vi. 11. [5] John iv. 14. [6] John x. 10.
[7] Col. iii. 3. [8] Col. iii. 4. [9] vers. 7—9.

carries up the soul into a purer region, where it draws purer breath. If you live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit.[1]

4. It is an active, a laborious, and fruitful life. They that live this life, live it by union with Christ; and they that are united with him, "abiding in him, bring forth much fruit,"[2]—when without him they could do nothing; as it there follows. They that live this life come thereupon,—their love abounding more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, or spiritual sense, (as the word αἴσθησις there used may most fitly be rendered,) discerning the things that differ, or approving or preferring the things that are more excellent, —"to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."[3] This is the tendency of this life. It is a principle, in those in whom it is, tending to usefulness and common good; and in order thereto, to growth and self-improvement. Again,

5. It is a most generous sort of life; that disdains mean things, cannot feed upon earth and ashes. Such communications it must have, as are suitable to the life of a man's spirit. Herein stands the life of the spirit,—in receiving and drawing in, communications from God. They that live this life "do hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be filled."[4] They "seek glory and honour and immortality," that they may finally attain eternal life.[5] This is a noble sort of life, that cannot be maintained, as it was not attained, by common means; that cannot live upon low, mean and base things. They that are of the earth can live upon things that spring from the earth; but heaven-born ones must be continually maintained by heavenly communications, beams of light, accompanied with vigorous influences that descend from thence.

6. It is a devoted life, sacred to God in Christ Jesus: "I, through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."[6] For as in the principle, it is an habitual determi-

[1] Gal. v. 25. [2] John xv. 5. [3] Phil. i. 9—11.
[4] Mat. v. 6. [5] Rom. ii. 7. [6] Gal. ii. 19.

nation of the soul towards God, through Christ; so, in the exercise, it is a continual, or often repeated, self-devoting or dedicating of ourselves accordingly: a "yielding of ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead."[1] And so, in Romans xiv., "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord," be owner, and so ruler, "both of the dead and living."[2] Then to whom should we live, but to him?

7. It is finally, immortal, eternal life. It is so in its tendency, and it is so in its complete and perfect issue, in its mature state; eternal life, such in the plenitude whereof everything of mortality is to be swallowed up.[3] This is that which the aspirations and groans of renewed souls aim at; not barely to be "unclothed,"—that were a mean thing, only to lay down this flesh that thereby we may escape the troubles that, being in it, we are exposed to; that would go but a little way,—but "to be clothed upon with the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," furnished and enriched with all the delights and glories of the Divine presence. Therefore our Saviour says of this life, they that have the beginnings of it, "they that drink of this water,—it shall be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life."[4] The spiritual life that renewed souls now live, will be eternal life. They differ not in kind; but the one will grow up into the other. Therefore saith our Saviour, "I give my sheep eternal life:"[5] 'I shall never have done giving, till I have improved the life I have given to eternal life,' in which there will be no ebbings and flowings; but where life shall be perfectly pure and in its full, mature state, without any mixture of death or deadliness; as anything is said to be pure, that is full of itself, without the mixture of the least thing that is alien or disa-

[1] Rom. vi 13. [2] vers. 7—9. [3] 2 Cor. v. 4.
[4] John iv. 14. [5] John x. 28.

greeable thereto. Everything of mortality shall be swallowed up in this life.

II. We are to note to you, according to the order proposed, the frequency and aptitude of this paraphrase of the gospel, —'words of life,' or of what is equivalent thereto. For that the gospel is meant by it, is out of question. It is all one as if the angel had said, "Go, preach the gospel." That some such phrase is usual to signify the gospel they can well tell, that are not strangers to the Bible. Sometimes this phrase is used to this purpose in the singular number, as "holding forth the word of life:"[1] sometimes in the plural, as in the 6th of John's Gospel, verse 68, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." And sometimes instead of 'life' is put salvation, which is the same thing. To be saved and to live this life is all one, whether you consider salvation begun or salvation consummate: salvation begun, is but this life begun. "He hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling."[2] When he regenerates any, he is said to save them: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."[3] And that complete, consummate salvation should be signified by this life consummate and complete, is obvious and familiar,—the phrases salvation and eternal life being so promiscuously used in Scripture to signify the same thing, that many places need not be quoted: "To you is the word of this salvation sent:"[4] "The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation:"[5] and not perishing, or being saved, is expounded by "having eternal or everlasting life."[6] And for the aptness of it, or that the words that compose and make up the gospel, are fitly called the words of life, will appear upon several accounts: as,

1. Inasmuch as this 'word' is the means of begetting this life: "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."[7] In regeneration is infused the first principle of this life. And

[1] Phil. ii. 16. [2] 2 Tim. i. 9. [3] Titus iii. 5. [4] Acts xiii. 26.
[5] Eph. i. 13. [6] John iii. 15—17. [7] James i. 18.

our Saviour prays for his disciples: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."[1] And sanctification, in the rise and beginning of it, is nothing else but regeneration.

2. Inasmuch as this 'word' improves this life, or is the means of improving it, and carrying it on towards its perfect state: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."[2] It is the means of our spiritual growth.

3. Inasmuch as this 'word' carries in it the promise of this life in the most perfect state of it: "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."[3] "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."[4] This is a recorded thing, and is the final and terminative promise of the gospel. All the promises of it run into this.

4. The gospel is the rule of that judgment by which all that shall partake therein are finally adjudged to eternal life; to this life in perfection.[5] Those that are absolved by our Lord Jesus Christ from the condemning sentence, and have the saving sentence passed upon them,—of them it is said, "They," namely the righteous, "go into life eternal," just immediately from the tribunal of their judge; which sentence and judgment is according to this gospel: "God will judge the secrets of all hearts, according to my gospel." Wherever that impress is to be found,—gospel righteousness,—it distinguishes them that belong to Christ, and marks them out for eternal life. These things fall under the former observation; the other two, which are to succeed, belong to the latter.

III. That it is the part of the ministers of the gospel, as they can have opportunity, to preach the words of this life. For the making out of this, I shall speak to these two things:—1. To show, That it ought to be their design and end, to help souls into this state of life:—2. That they ought to

[1] John xvii. 17. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 2. [3] 1 John ii. 25.
[4] 1 John v. 11, 12. [5] Matt. xxv. 46.

preach the gospel, or the words of this life, in order hereunto. —That ought to be their end; and this their work, in order to this end.

1. It ought to be their end, to help souls into this state of life. For,

i. It is the end of their office, therefore it ought to be *their* end. It would be unaccountable that they should design a diverse end from the proper end of their office, or that they should not design *that*. Now the gospel is, by its designation, to be the ministration of spirit and life unto souls.[1]

ii. They ought to design the bringing of souls to Christ, to get them into Christ, who is the fountain of this life. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life,"[2] saith our Saviour. And sure it is the business and ought to be the design of the ministers of the gospel, as much as in them is, to bring souls to Christ, and to counterwork the disinclination that is in men thereto. You will not come: but we will do all that in us lies to persuade you to come; and to come for this end, that you may live.

iii. It undoubtedly ought to be their end, to have souls under their ministry regenerated and born again. This they ought to design, and this is the very beginning of that state of life; and they are therefore entitled "fathers," in reference to this their great design and business. 'If you have had ten thousand instructors, yet you have not had many fathers; for I have begotten you to Christ,'[3] saith the apostle Paul. 'You were regenerated by my ministry.' And this ought to be every minister's design, that souls be regenerated by their ministry. So the same apostle speaks of that servant of Philemon's, and his own son, Onesimus: "I beseech thee for my son, Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds."[4]

iv. They ought to design the perfecting of souls unto eternal life. For this end was the ministry given, in all the degrees and kinds of it; namely, "for the perfecting of the

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 6. [2] John v. 40. [3] 1 Cor. iv. 15. [4] Phil. 10.

body of Christ,"—as you find:[1] "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And then is this new man perfect, when this new life is mature in him, and grown up to its fulness.

2. As that ought to be their end, so this ought to be their work in order to that end, to preach this word of life, as they can have opportunity. This will appear several ways: as,—

i. They are commanded so to do. Christ commands it, "Go teach all nations," etc.[2] His apostle gives it in charge, even "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, to preach the word; to be instant in season and out of season."[3] And in the former epistle, having before given the same charge, to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine,"[4] he afterwards, in reference to this and many other precepts, urges his charge "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,"—adding, "and the elect angels,—to observe these things," etc. And here there is a command from God by an angel, "Go and speak to the people in the temple, the words of this life." The obligation by this precept,—given the apostles with circumstances,—lies in substance upon all that are ministers of the gospel of Christ.

ii. They are directed how to do it, as well as commanded to do it. The great God instructs his prophet Ezekiel, "Say to them, As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"[5] Words are put into his servants' mouths, even these "words of life."

[1] Eph. iv. 11—13. [2] Matt. xxviii. 19. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.
[4] 1 Tim. iv. 13. [5] Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

iii. They are threatened if they neglect to do it; as in the 8th verse of that 33rd of Ezekiel, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

iv. There are encouraging promises of great reward, (though that reward is all of grace,) to them that succeed in this work. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."[1]

v. They have special assistance, according as they depend and seek it from the blessed God, in this work. He abets them in it. Hereupon "they strive according to his power that works in them mightily."[2] Though all have not assistance equally, yet all have what is suitable to the pleasure of the free donor, when they faithfully engage and persist in this blessed and glorious work.

vi. They are assured of acceptance in it, though they succeed not; so pleasing is this work to the blessed God, the endeavouring to bring souls into this state of life! "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord."[3] This indeed, is spoken principally of Christ himself; but subordinately of all that serve him in this work. So saith the apostle Paul: "We are unto God a sweet savour" —or odour rather, as the word *ὀσμή* more properly signifies— "of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the odour of death unto death; and to the other the odour of life unto life."[4] And this lay with a mighty weight upon his spirit. Oh that ever we should be the savour of death unto death to any! "Who is sufficient for these things?" But whether of life or death, we are a sweet odour to God in Christ as to both, when he sees the sincerity of our hearts, and how fain we would fetch souls out of the state of death into this life. So grateful and pleasant to him is the work, *effected*, of saving souls, that the *attempt* and desire of it is not ungrateful.

IV. We are further to show, that this is the part of the

[1] Dan. xii. 3. [2] Col. i. 29. [3] Isa. xlix. 5. [4] 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

ministers of the gospel,—to preach the words of this life,—even by angelical suffrage and declaration. We have the concurrence, in one, of that whole most excellent order (for among them can be no disagreeing votes or sentiments) to put us out of all doubt that this is our business. And that is a great additional enforcement of it upon us. But here it is requisite to do these two things:—To show how far only the angels can be concerned in a matter of this nature; and—That though they are concerned no further, yet we have here sufficient evidence of their suffrage and complacential approbation.

1. How far only they can be concerned in matters of this nature.

i. Not so far as to do this work themselves. They are not to be the preachers of this gospel; God did not think that fit. If that had been the known and stated course, the apostles might have replied, upon their being sent to preach this gospel, 'You that are an immortal angel, whom no violence can touch or hurt, go you and preach this gospel.' No, they were to do no such work; by the counsel of heaven this work is committed to men. In that marvellous conversion of the apostle Paul in his way to Damascus, he is sent to Ananias in the city, to be told by him what he was to do.[1] And when there was that special regard had to Cornelius's prayers and alms, that God was resolved he should not want the express discovery of the gospel of Christ, He sends an angel to him, not to instruct him himself, but to direct him to send for Peter, as you find,[2] who was to speak to him words by which he and his house were to be saved; as appears by comparing those two chapters together. So that they are not to do this work themselves. Nor,

ii. Are they so far concerned as to confer the office. The office of a preacher doth not come from an angel. When the angel saith this to these apostles, they were apostles and ministers of Christ before; he doth not make them such; nor

[1] Acts ix. 6. [2] Acts x. and the following chapter.

is that God's way of conveying the office. No, it comes from Christ himself originally; he gave the first commission, "Go, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."[1] So that the same office comes from Christ, to the end of the world. Though the persons that first received the commission were to continue but their own short time, yet the commission is continued to such as should, in several ages, succeed them; and still from Christ, but by other appointed means which he hath settled, and which remain stated in his church;—those that are in that office of preachers or ministers themselves, conveying it to others, who shall, according to fixed gospel rules, be found qualified for it. But the business of angels, wherein God hath been pleased to employ them, in reference to these affairs of his church, is only sometimes to determine circumstances,—as the angel here to these apostles: now is the time, "Go forthwith to the temple, and preach to the people the words of this life." The obligation to the thing did not come from the angel, but the determination of the season and place, for that time. So we find as to other circumstances. The apostle Paul is directed by an angel, appearing in the likeness of a man of Macedonia, to go and preach to the Macedonians, saying to him, "Come over, and help us."[2] Thus God does when he thinks fit; but we are not warranted to expect the signification of his mind this way, he having appointed other means that are sufficient. But yet,

2. Notwithstanding that angels are concerned no further than you have heard; yet that they may be concerned, and have been concerned so far, is an evidence of their complacential approbation of the thing. And this will appear partly by the consideration of the nature and temper of those excellent creatures; and partly, by the consideration of several concurrent things, of which the Holy Scripture gives us notice.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [2] Acts xvi. 9.

i. Consider their very nature; unto whom their sanctity and their benignity *is* their very nature, in this their confirmed state. We are not to think that this angel, this messenger sent from God, conveyed his message as if it passed through a dead trunk, that could be no way affected therewith; but as one highly savouring his message, taking great complacency in it. It was pleasant to him in the delivery, thus to direct these apostles of our Lord, 'Go to the temple, preach to the people the words of this life; your immediate call is from the prison to the temple, to teach the people how they may be set at liberty from the bonds of death, worse bonds than yours.' So much we may collect from their habitual sanctity and devotedness to God—the dutiful, ready compliance, and conformity of their will to the good and acceptable will of their Maker and Lord—and the peculiar benignity of their nature,—that they were *glad* to be thus employed; it was welcome work to any one of them that carried this message.

ii. Several other things concur, (mentioned in the Holy Scripture,) to make us apprehend their complacential approbation of so grateful an errand: as first,

The solemn jubilee that they held upon our Lord's descent into this world upon this saving design. Then an innumerable "multitude of the heavenly host" are brought in triumphing together, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."[1] This appears to have been their common sense, and so, no doubt, was the sense of this angel at this time. They all celebrate the descent of our Lord upon his saving design, coming down into this world to be the Light of men, as it is expressed: "In him was life; and the life was the Light of men."[2] A luminous life it was, that he came to bless this world with. And when the angels did celebrate this descent of his with so much joy and jubilation, it was in pursuance of a proclamation that had before passed through all the spacious

[1] Luke ii. 14. [2] John i. 4.

heavens; when "He brought his first-begotten Son into the world," it was said, "And let all the angels of God worship him."[1] They were all to adore the Redeemer as such; because he vouchsafed to be a Redeemer to such as we were, buried and lost in death. Secondly,

Consider the ordinary stated course of their ministration: what that is and whither it tends, you find expressed,[2] "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heirs of salvation and heirs of eternal life are the same, as hath been noted before. This they in their stated course pursue; this is the design of their ministry,—to be helpful to those who are to be the heirs of salvation. Thirdly,

We may collect it from the joy that they express for the success of the gospel of this kind, where they observe it to succeed, if in the conversion but of one sinner: "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God," if but one sinner repenteth.[3] The heavens are hereupon filled with joy; the angels rejoice that one is now added to their happy number —gained from under the power of death and Satan, the great destroyer of souls. Fourthly,

The prospect they have, that all that partake of this life here in the beginnings of it, shall partake with them in the eternal life and blessedness of the future state. All that are here converted and regenerated, they are by degrees "coming to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."[4] All this is plain evidence that there is a complacential concurrence and suffrage of angels to the ministers of Christ, doing their work, preaching the words of this life, according as they have opportunity.

The use of this you may easily apprehend might be vastly copious, but we must be within necessary limits.

[1] Heb. i. 6.
[2] Heb. i. 14.
[3] Luke xv. 10.
[4] Heb. xii. 22, 23.

1. We may learn hence, that such as the gospel is, such ought our attendance to it to be. There ought to be a correspondence between what the gospel in itself is, and our manner of attending the dispensation of it. Doth it consist of "words of life"? then so ought it to be attended to, as containing the "words of life," the words of this life, this noble and most excellent sort of life. Methinks this should strike the consciences of some; I wonder if it do not of any! How few do attend the dispensation of this gospel, as apprehending it to contain the words of such a life! In what agonies of spirit should we attend upon the dispensation of this gospel, if we understood the matter so! They are the words of the most excellent kind of life that we hear, when we hear the gospel of Christ truly preached. This ought to carry a sting and pungency with it to the hearts of such as, upon inquiry,—'When did I attend upon the gospel, as containing the words of life?'—cannot give to their own hearts and consciences any satisfying account. Let the inquiry proceed further, 'Have I got life by it? Did it ever enter into my heart, as the word of life? Did I ever so much as design, expect, or wish that it should?' What shall be said to such, that if they answer truly, must give it against themselves?

2. We may learn hence, that when God is pleased to put such a dignity upon poor mean men as to speak to men by them, and about so great concerns, the affairs of "this life"—things so high and sublime as "the words of this life" import—we ought hereupon both to acknowledge God's wisdom and compassion towards us; and be sensible of our obligation highly to esteem them for their work's sake.

i. We ought to acknowledge the wisdom and compassion of God, that he hath chosen this way to treat with men; that he doth not always speak, as he did once to the Israelites, by "thunder and lightning, and a terrible tempest, and a voice of words, which voice they that heard, entreated they might never hear it any more;" and thereupon desired Moses that he would speak to them from God, for they could not hear such a voice but they must die for it. No, God speaks

to men by men like themselves; who have the same nature and the same interest, that are to be upon the same bottom with them, and preach the same gospel of salvation by which they are to be saved themselves. And,

ii. We are to honour such as he puts this honour upon, "for their work's sake; to esteem them highly in love" on this account.[1] "How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings!"[2] How welcome their approaching steps, how graceful is their motion towards us! They that labour in the word and doctrine, are upon that account worthy of double honour:[3] and all this not for their own sake, but for their work's sake. For the greatest instruments that ever were in the world employed in this work,—what are they? That great apostle Paul counts himself as nothing; though not behind the chiefest apostles, yet a mere nothing: so he nullifies himself, diminishes himself to a thing of nought, a perfect nullity! Elsewhere: "I laboured more abundantly than they all," saith he, "yet not I?"[4] "Who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"[5] Who is Paul? As if he would say, it cannot be told; too little a thing to be seen or known, or that any notice should be taken of him! We cannot, indeed, have too mean thoughts of ourselves; so little we are, compared with the greatness of our work: and none can have so mean thoughts of us as we ought to have of ourselves, who should know ourselves best, and better understand our own little value than any others can. But when any esteem the ministers of Christ for their work's sake, they only express a respect to him that sends them, to the message they bring, and to their own souls, that are in such a way so tenderly cared for.

3. We may learn hence, how peculiarly spiritual and intellectual this life is, which such words do so nearly concern. Do you know any life besides, that is produced by

[1] 1 Thess. v. 13. [2] Rom. x. 15. [3] 1 Tim. v. 17.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 10. [5] 1 Cor. iii. 5.

words, and by words maintained and improved? No words can otherwise affect us than as they convey a sense into our minds so as to be understood, and into our hearts and spirits, being inwardly received and believed there. This must be an intellectual and most pure sort of life, that depends upon words, that can be begotten by words and improved by words and perfected by words. It shows it to be a sort of life far above the sphere of this bodily life; this bodily life is not to be begotten or maintained by words. You cannot by words recover life into a dead finger, much less into a dead corpse. And again, what admirable words are those that can make us live, transmit life into the very centre, and make our hearts live! It is true, it is not the *mere* words, but divine breath animating those words, that begets this life: but that still proves it to be a spiritual life. The *divine* word hath a peculiarity with it: that, indeed, through the efficacy of a divine blessing accompanying it, makes the ordinary means available for the sustaining of our natural life; man lives not by "bread" only, but by the "word" that proceeds out of God's mouth; much more is his vital word necessary to the production and maintenance of the life of our souls.

4. Hence we may collect how dismal and sad their case is, that sit from time to time with dead souls under the words of life! Year after year there are words of life spoken and breathed forth in those assemblies where they are hearers; yet when the truth of the matter comes to be told, *they* must say, 'I feel nothing of this life in my soul; my heart is dead still, is still a stone or a clod! No words that I have heard, have awakened, quickened, melted, purified my heart, warmed and inflamed my heart! Dead I was in trespasses and sins, and so I remain, notwithstanding all the words of this life which I have heard!' This is a dismal case. When it was God's chosen way to make his word the ministration of spirit and life to souls, if it do not breathe in these words, wherein can it be expected to breathe?

5. We may collect hence, that if, by angelical suffrage, it ought to be the business of ministers to preach the words of

this life; then, undoubtedly, by angelical suffrage, the words of this life are words worth the hearing, worth attending and listening to. An angel would have been loth to have been the messenger to these great worthies, the apostles of our Lord, charging them to go and preach in the temple, to the people, a jargon of impertinent, idle stories. No; but when he says, "Go, and preach to the people the words of this life," that leaves the matter out of all doubt that here was a ready concurrence, both in judgment and complacence, of the angel hereto; and that in full effect, he pronounced these things worth listening to. Though we cannot suppose him so assuming as to think he could by his approbation add anything real to His authority who sent him; yet as to the reputation of the message with us, it is not without its weight: as it makes a great difference whether a prince signify his mind, in this or that affair, by a person of honour or by a foot-boy. Therefore when any of you have heard the words of this life with neglect and disregard, you have set your judgment against the judgment, at once, of the great God and of the glorious angels of God: it signifies as if you thought yourselves wiser than God and than any angel in heaven. They esteem these words worthy the most serious attention and regard; but you look upon them as trifles, not worth the regarding. Worms of this earth, mushrooms lately sprung up, mean abjects but beginning to crawl, set their mouth and heart against heaven; oppose their rash, presumptuous judgment to the judgment of the supreme Lord, and of those wise sages, the blessed and holy angels, that stand always in the presence of God and hear his wisdom! The vanities of this world are thought worth the regarding; but the words of eternal life are counted unworthy to be regarded or listened to; what absurd insolence is this! to persist in a practical judgment, so directly contrary to the judgment of the wise and holy angels; and, as is evident, of God himself who sent this message! When such men do meet, is not all their talk vanity? running upon the things only of the earth and time, mere impertinency at best to such as have

souls to save? But also are not bold, profane jests, about things most sacred, usual ingredients in their conversation; namely, what is most opposite to such a design? These things, they reckon, sound well in a coffee-house or a tavern; but how do they sound "in heavenly places," whither the report presently flies up, as may be collected from Eph. iii. 10: "To the principalities and powers in the heavenly places is made known by the church"—that is, in or about the affairs of the church—"the manifold wisdom of God: which cannot but imply their animadversion upon the follies of men, counterworking that wisdom. Nor can the censure of so excellent creatures and of so bright understandings, be lightly esteemed by any but most stupid minds. And if such an addition signify nothing, why doth the apostle, having given a charge "before God and before Jesus Christ," add, "and before the elect angels?"

6. Learn farther, that if any servants of Christ have faithfully, in a continued course, to the end of their time, been intent upon this business,—preaching the words of this life,—their memory ought to be very precious to us when they are gone: they who have been employed in this work, called to it by God, it is all one whether his mind were signified to them by an angel or any other way. For it was not an angel that gave the authority, but only conveyed this particular command, as hath been noted. When God in his ordinary method hath called forth a servant of his to preach the words of this life, and he hath laboured in it faithfully to his uttermost, the memory of such a one ought to be very dear and precious to all to whom he was known, and that have had opportunity of hearing from him the words of eternal life, or that shall receive a faithful account of him. We are so directed and taught: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."[1] And he still as much requires the same thing as ever he did.

[1] Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

And truly such a servant of Christ was this my dear and worthy brother, the very reverend Mr. Vink, whom God hath lately taken from among us. He was the son of a noted citizen of Norwich: nor will equal judges of his true worth think it a despicable degree of lustre added to that city, that such a man was born there. His ancestors were early Protestants, when the Reformation was struggling for a birth in Flanders; where, when the persecution against that profession began to rage,—the zeal and fervour of their religion not admitting to be concealed or suffering them to temporize,—Providence ordered their seasonable transportation to that city of refuge which became native to their following posterity, and among them to this worthy man; who hath often been heard to say, He reckoned it a greater honour to have descended from so pious ancestors, than if he could have derived his pedigree from the greatest princes.—He was, indeed, designed for multiplying the offspring of the everlasting Father, and seemed formed for this work from his entrance upon the stage of this world; so were those things very early interwoven in the frame and temper of his soul, that were to be the elements of great future usefulness in this kind of service. For in his very tender years, there appeared very early religion, great seriousness, an habitual awe and reverence of the Divine Majesty; insomuch that none could observe when he first began to be a fearer of God: which pious disposition of mind was,—in conjunction with so great a propensity and addictedness to books, with desire of learning, as was very unusual at that age,—*manifest* even in his childhood.

And very early was his preparatory endeavour for that noble employment to which he afterwards betook himself. For as nature and grace appeared to have betimes combined to frame him as an instrument for such service; it was soon very evident, that in the former, God had inlaid a deeper foundation, endowing him with singular parts, above the common rate; which as they came gradually to shine out in the great improvements he had made, under instruction, in a

little time; there appeared such quickness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, strength of memory, quickness of fancy without exorbitancy, as are seldom found to meet together: and these were accompanied with so spontaneous diligence beyond what the usual methods of education obliged him to, that in his tender years, while yet under the eye of his parents, they have thought it requisite sometimes to hide his books, lest he should injure himself by over-intent and close study. So that he was ripe for a university much younger than others ordinarily are. Accordingly he was sent up in his fourteenth year to Cambridge, where he remained many years a Fellow and great ornament of Pembroke-Hall, even beyond the time of his taking the degree of bachelor of divinity; in which time he had treasured up a large stock of all useful learning, and might be fitly styled a universal scholar. But religion, governing the whole course of his studies, kept him steady to his great end; and made him most intent upon *such* things as might render him most useful for his designed work;—the original languages, with such rational learning as was subservient to theology, and then theology, and the study of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

For diversion he was no stranger to history; namely, civil, which was fundamental, but more diverting; as well as ecclesiastical, which was more immediately necessary to his purpose. And among his other accomplishments, his skill and accuracy in the Latin tongue was, as I have been otherwise informed, much remarked in the university; so that the Professor in the Chair, when he took the above-mentioned degree, (as was reported by an eye and ear-witness,) disputing *pro formâ* with him, after he had somewhat longer than ordinary opposed him,—he still answering in neat and elegant Latin,—said, 'Mr. Vink, I only so long continued my opposition to you, to give you opportunity to entertain the auditory with that judgment and eloquence, which have appeared in your answers.' And that to express himself politely in that tongue was become habitual and familiar to him, appeared in that

writing, in that language, a weekly account of the more remarkable things that occurred to him in the course of his life,—which since his death hath come to my view,—though in such a case a man only writes to himself, yet I have observed therein such strictures of elegancy, both of style and phrase, as signified it was become impossible to him, if he writ anything, not to write handsomely, and as might become both a Christian and a scholar.

This narrative was continued until his growing infirmities put a period to it, some months sooner than to his life itself. The mention of it here, you see, was occasional and somewhat digressive. Therefore, to return: when he had passed through the long course of his academical studies and employment, London, whither his fame had now reached, could not long want such a man. Hither he was called; and here he shone a bright light in two churches of this city successively; namely, Saint Michael's in Cornhill, which he easily quitted upon another's claim; more from an indisposition to contend, which was little suitable to his calm temper, than from defect of title, could his friends, that so highly valued him, have prevailed with him to admit of its being disputed; but they had the less reason to be urgent upon him, for that he was so immediately chosen to a neighbour church, where he continued preaching the words of this life, till August 24, 1662; when, not satisfied with some things in the Act that then took place, he calmly quitted his station, but not his ministry: which he never refused to exercise, when desired, in distinct assemblies, when they had only the favour of a connivance. But his more ordinary course was,—after he was deprived of his former public liberty,—to preach for many years, as the apostle Paul did, in his own hired house; whither his great abilities and most lively vigorous ministry drew an assembly not inconsiderable; whereto he both dispensed the word and —to such as were qualified and desirous—the sacrament of the Lord's supper, at certain seasons. And this course he continued, especially that of preaching in his house, till bodily disability made it impossible to him; which then he deeply

lamented. Yet did he not decline all communion with the established church: whereupon he had experience of the haughty, supercilious temper of some men's spirits, on the one hand and the other; who assume to themselves an interdicted, unhallowed liberty of sitting in judgment upon other men's consciences; and adventure to censure *them* as men of no conscience, that abandon not their own, to follow theirs;—taking notice sometimes with just regret, that he incurred the anger of two sorts of men; of some, that he went no further; of others, that he went so far.

Looking into his memoirs, I found that rich vein of religion and godliness running throughout the whole, that I think no serious man could read them without being very deeply affected therewith. Week after week, whatsoever was more remarkable,—relating to himself, his family, or the church of God,—is punctually set down, and intermixed with most pious ejaculations: *as,* 'My God, and my All.' If any trouble occurred, 'Yet God is mine, and I am his.' You everywhere discern the breathings of a holy devout soul. Ejaculatory supplications are very frequent for his relatives and domestics: 'The Lord sanctify them, the Lord wash them, the Lord protect them; Lead them by thy truth and counsels.' On all occasions that spirit of prayer and universal godliness discovers itself all along, mixed with the greatest tenderness and compassion that I have anywhere met with. If any one were sick in his family, his dear consort, his son, daughter, or daughter-in-law, his most beloved brother, or if a servant, male or female, it is noted down with his *suspiria*, the breathings forth of earnest supplications on their behalf: and afterwards, upon their recovery, most solemn thanksgivings. But if any one died, then such self-humiliation, such lying low before the Lord, such yielding compliance with the Divine pleasure, with the design of spiritual improvement thereby, as I believe hath been seldom seen. And in whatsoever case, there are expressions of a steady trust in God in reference to all his affairs, both of this world and that which is to come. If any difficulties came in view, upon

the mention thereof, he presently subjoins, 'But I will trust in God; he will show me the plain and the right way, wherein he would have me to go.'—His charity to the distressed was always flowing and very exemplary; but much more the pity which wrought in his heart towards such, whose miseries and necessities were such as it was never possible for him to relieve proportionably to the largeness of his soul. He in the meantime suffered the calamity of every one whose case came to his notice. His humility was such, as did shine through all his other excellencies. He was, indeed, a great man in every one's eyes but his own. No one ever thought meanly of him, that knew him, but himself.

His love of solitude and retirement was peculiarly remarkable. No man had more opportunity, in his circumstances, to multiply friends and acquaintance; but I never knew any one who minded and studied it less; yet where once he was acquainted, there could not be a more pleasant and delectable friend. It was remote from him to seek acquaintance, nor did he need; it was enough for him to receive those that were so kind to themselves as to seek his. And it is evident that love of solitude is peculiar to those, who, through the grace of God and especially a sort of self-benignity, have been capable of becoming good company to themselves. For empty persons or such as are only full of malignity,—men of ill minds, and conscious to themselves of ill design,—for such, I do not wonder that of all things they care not to be alone. They can never be grateful company to themselves. But he had laid up such a treasure of human and divine knowledge, that I know not where he could find pleasanter company than his own.—And his special gratitude for divine mercies was very observable. I have found, in his memorials, he was much in admiring God, that He had done so much for him and his, and more especially for the helps he had from heaven in the performance of his ministerial work: 'Blessed be God for the assistance he gave me such a day.' And very particularly at the Lord's supper: 'Blessed be God for what hath passed between him and me at his table; blessed be God that his bonds have taken hold of my soul!'

Though his temper and the chosen circumstances of his life kept off from him, in great part, more frequent occasions of communicating to the world the rich treasures wherewith his mind was stored, yet when such occasions have occurred, he neglected them not. But while through his own continuing dissatisfaction he remained excluded from a public station,—besides his constant ministerial labours in a private way, he embraced other occasions that Providence offered, of doing such work as became much more public, and wherein he did more than speak from a pulpit to a single congregation of hearers; speaking from the press to the world, as any should think fit to be his readers. Divers of his excellent sermons have been long extant to common view, wherein, "being dead, he yet speaketh:" an account of which, though elsewhere given,[1] it is not unfit here to repeat. As, before his ejection, he had one sermon in the first volume of the Morning Exercises, preached in the church of Saint Giles, upon 'Original Sin;' so after it, he had another, in that against popery, upon the 'Grounds of the Protestants' Separation from the Church of Rome;' another, upon the 'Worth of the Soul,' in the continuation of the Morning Exercise Questions, with another, on 'Gospel Grace the best Motive to Holiness.'[2] And to these I must add that valuable performance of his on the Acts of the Holy Apostles, in the supplement to Mr. Pool's Annotations on the Bible,—by mistake ascribed to another worthy person, who hath to me disclaimed it, and assured me it was Mr. Vink's. And it is a satisfaction to me, that I have his concurring judgment in the interpretation of this text; who writing upon it, when he could little apprehend his own funeral sermon was so many years after to be preached from it, tells us that though some admit of an hypallage in the expression, "the words of this life," and join the pronoun to the other substantive, reading it, 'these words of life'—because by *this life* is ordinarily understood the present temporary life,[3]—yet he says, 'there needs not this

[1] In Mr. Calamy's Abridgment, etc. [2] Vol. 4. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 19.

translatious sense; by this life the angel might very well understand eternal life and salvation, for that was it which the Sadducees denied, and for the preaching of which life, the apostles were imprisoned.' To which purpose also the learned Doctor Hammond speaks in his annotations on the same place.

The "words of this life" he preached to the last, and lived it in its initial state, as he now lives it (being, in the kind, the same life) in its perfect, eternal state. And we may now put him with those holy men (as he speaks in the argument which he prefixes to this book) who having lived answerably to their profession and hope, do, when we read these things, seem to speak unto us and tell us,—what they say was inscribed upon the statue of some deified hero,—*Si feceritis sicut nos, eritis sicut nos;* 'If ye shall live as we have done, and suffer as we have suffered, then shall you be glorious and happy as we are.'

And yet such a life as this must end, a life transacted at such a rate! Whither should this carry and direct all our thoughts and aspirings? I bless God we have such instances of many, of whom we must say, it is impossible but that such men are got into a good state. A great confirmation of the truth of our religion! We must be assured such a one cannot be lost in a grave; his works must follow him into a higher region. But I add,

7. That, since they who do preach the words of life, do yet themselves die, let us attend upon their ministry accordingly. We have such and such to preach to us the words of life; but they are mortal men, and must not preach to us always. Therefore let such a thought take place: 'Take we heed that we do not lose them, while we have them.' Oh let the words of life, which they preach, be entertained as such. Our Saviour saith of John the Baptist, "He was a burning and a shining light, and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." You can rejoice in no such light but for a season. You may say, 'If such and such that are now preaching to us the word of life do drop, God can raise up

others in their room to preach the same word :' and I hope he *will;* that when such a one as I drop, he will raise up some other to preach to you at another rate,—with more warmth and vigour and success than ever I have done. But yet you are to consider that you are mortal too, as well as we. And admit you have those who shall far exceed them that have gone before; yet you know not how short your time may be under them. Therefore "whatever your hand findeth to do" in this kind, "do it with all your might." Labour to catch at the words of this life, as once one in distress did at words of a much inferior concern, and when a meaner life hung in doubt. We are continually hovering between life and death. How fast are we dropping away from one another! Every one that dies from among us, doth, even dying, utter such a voice. Amidst so many deaths, admit, draw in, as vital breath, "the words of this life." Dread, as the most frightful of all deaths, that the very words of this life should be to you "the savour of death unto death!"

*** The following letter of Howe, never before published, (received too late to be inserted in the memoir, which had all been printed off before it reached me,) was courteously sent by Mr. Macray, of Oxford, to Mr. R. Machray, of Sidney College, Cambridge, to be transmitted to me. Two letters of Howe, to the same correspondent—the Rev. Mr. Thornton, Chaplain to the Duke of Bedford—will be found in the memoir. (See Memoir, pp. 282—5.)

The letter is chiefly of interest as exhibiting in Howe's old age, the trait which Cromwell had remarked in him so many years before; namely, that when he preferred requests to the great, it was always for others or for the public, never for himself. (See Memoir, p. 78.)

The injunction to his correspondent, in the postscript, seems to have had reference to the inclosed list "of names;" for the suppression of which, (at least of *two*) it may easily be supposed there might be obvious reasons. If the injunction referred to the entire letter, it is not easy to see why it should have been given. The result, at all events, shows that, in spite of such instructions to correspondents, the adage is apt to prove true—*Litera scripta manet.* It was copied from a volume of Dr. Rawlinson's "Miscellaneous MSS.," in the Bodleian Library, lettered "Letters to J. Thornton":—

"L. L.,[1] Jun. 20, '96.

"Reverend Sir,

"I doubt not you will effectually do your part to obtain from my Lord Duke the grant of Milton Abbot, for Mr.

[1] Love Lane, Aldermanbury. See Memoir, p. 282, *note.*

Doidge, which, though it will be a kindness to him, will be a greater service to his Grace himself. Your representation will, I hope, signify more than the importunities of such as less regard the Duke's interest amongst the sober gentry of Devon, than the serving of a private turn.

"There is a society of worthy gentlemen and citizens who, for some years past, have made it their business, with great diligence, expense, and success, to carry on a design for punishing debauchery in London and Middlesex; who have sent the inclosed names of persons that they think very well qualified to be put into the commission of the peace for Middlesex, which they desire may be humbly presented to his Grace for that purpose; as two others, undernamed, that they think of as the paper expresses. They well know the men they mention. The measures they judge by, are,—being for the interest of the Government and his Grace's interest, with zeal to do good, or *è contra*. The persons that so judge, are well known to

"Worthy Sir,

"Your most respectful humble servant,

"J. HOWE."

"My son hath attempted (with disappointment) to wait upon you on the behalf of the inhabitants of Chulmeleigh, in Devon. If he find you, and anything be feasible for them, I pray you give your help.

"I pray you burn this when you have communicated the contents. For who knows into what hands it may, by accident, hereafter come?"

"For the Reverend Mr. John Thornton, Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, at Bedford-house, in the Strand."

A SERMON,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE JUSTLY LAMENTED DEATH OF THE TRULY REVEREND

MR. JOHN HOWE,

DECEASED APRIL 2ND,

PREACHED TO HIS CONGREGATION, APRIL 8, 1705, AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

By John Spademan, Minister of the Gospel.

TO MY SINCERELY HONOURED FRIENDS,

MRS. MARGARET HOWE, DR. GEORGE HOWE,

MR. JOHN HOWE, MRS. PHILLIPPE COLLET, MR. JAMES HOWE,

WITH OTHER NEAR RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED.

My worthy Friends,

If either the desire of him whom the all-wise Disposer hath translated, or yours, (differing in this single matter from his,) had invited me to preach a funeral sermon for your excellent relative, I should have found a real unwillingness to such a service; and have judged it more eligible to have been wholly silent, than have spoken so few things as are mentioned in this practical discourse, concerning him. He, indeed, received from the Father of lights, so great a variety of both natural and Christian perfections, that he was not only a shining light and ornament of his age, but an inviting example of universal goodness; the exercises whereof, towards men, did strongly recommend him to the esteem of those from whom his judgment in some things disagreed: so that, (though he was most remote from seeking honour on this earth,) he had that principal recompense of piety in this life,—a good name; which must preserve him from oblivion, though all his near relatives and acquaintance should studiously conceal his just praises. Nor can he want a monument to make him live in following ages, whose excellent writings have gained the approving

suffrage of those who are capable judges ; and they will be valued, while a relish of good sense and genuine piety is found among men.

All this speaks your loss, and of his Church, yea, and of the nation, to be the greater ; and I persuade myself, very few of his order have been so generally lamented ;—which is a tribute due to his real worth. But the obedience and resignation of your faith have been the more grateful to Him who hath called you to make such an offering ; and whose mighty hand alone is able to bind up this wound, and both sustain and guide you in your progress to the same happiness which he now possesseth. If this plain discourse may contribute unto this blessed design, this will induce you to excuse the publishing of it, and the defects which are very obvious in

Your affectionate faithful servant,

In our common Lord,

J. SPADEMAN.

A SERMON,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE GREATLY LAMENTED DEATH OF THE TRULY REVEREND

MR. JOHN HOWE.

2 TIM. iii. 14.

"BUT CONTINUE THOU IN THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST LEARNED AND HAST BEEN ASSURED OF, KNOWING OF WHOM THOU HAST LEARNED THEM."

It is reasonably supposed that the mantle which fell from the prophet Elijah, as he was taken up into heaven, was highly valued and carefully preserved by his disciple Elisha; especially when he experienced a miraculous virtue annexed to it,—the waters of Jordan being divided when this garment was applied to them; as we read.[1] Indeed, when your late most worthy pastor, who may justly be styled an Elijah of this age, was translated by death, he left no garment which has any virtue to recommend it: but—which is far more important—before his translation, he let fall such holy instructions and heavenly counsels, as, through Divine assistance, are able to dry up the waters of excessive grief and open a passage into the celestial Canaan, into which himself hath entered. It is not necessary, nor is it my design, to open fresh springs of sorrow for so very grievous a breach as the hand of God hath made, by representing the exceeding

[1] 2 Kings ii. 14.

loss which his family and relatives, this society, yea, the whole city and nation, hath sustained. There is the justest reason, with heart-affecting sorrow, to repeat Elisha's words used on the occasion now mentioned: "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel (England), and the horsemen thereof."[1] The death of one Elijah, who had the spirit of prayer, whereby to open heaven and bring down refreshing showers of blessings on a whole people,—the death, I say, of one such must be a public and common loss, never enough to be deplored.

The attiring of this place and of many assembled in it, speaks it to be a house of mourning; but our concernment here is not to indulge a fruitless sorrow, which can neither bring him back to us, nor assist our happy ascent to him, which is far more covetable; and will certainly be attained, by "continuing in those things which we have learned, knowing" and considering "of whom we have learned them."

This excellent advice, given by the apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy, I have judged a more proper subject of your meditation on this occasion, than an encomium of your deceased pastor, whose truly humble mind made him discover an averseness to any funeral solemnities or discourses, which had a tendency to magnify him and gain public applause: he hated the sounding a trumpet before him, living and dying. I am not appointed to perform such a service, though but a reasonable tribute to his memory; only the sense of my own duty has induced me to discourse something from the Scripture that hath been read; which will, through the Divine blessing, assist you to improve this severe dispensation, and comply with the apparent design of his office and ministrations. It is evident that such a providence loudly proclaims the vanity of human life, the unalterable law of mortality, which must be executed on the very best inhabitants of this world; so that neither the brightest virtues nor greatest serviceableness, neither the use of the most promising means

[1] 2 Kings ii. 12.

nor the most ardent and united supplications for the prolonging of life, can exempt any from the end of all the living;—which therefore ought to be laid to heart: but I judge it most useful, that our meditations correspond with the character which was eminently peculiar to him whom God hath taken away from us; and whose long excellent ministry bespeaks every one of us in the language of the text: "But continue thou in the things, etc., knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

It is generally agreed by interpreters that the apostle, in the latter part of the verse, intends himself; and that, not only, or principally, as invested with the apostolic office, but as distinguished by something in his temper, conduct, and condition which did strongly oblige his disciples to continue in the things they had learned, and being duly considered, would effectually engage them unto this practice.

The preceding context leads us to this explication; where, without once mentioning his apostolic commission or the miraculous gifts by which he confirmed his doctrine, he only represents to Timothy,[1] "Thou hast fully known, (or for a long time hast fully observed,) my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me;"—plainly intimating, that the life and practice, the sufferings and afflictions of one who teacheth the gospel of Christ carry a most cogent argument and strong efficacy to engage them who are taught, to a firm persevering in the truth and duties of the Christian religion; which were, without all doubt, the things which Timothy had learned of this apostle, whose office and design led him to teach the holy doctrine and rules of the gospel.

The text, thus cleared, offers to our consideration, a twofold important instruction.

First. The possibility and danger of departing from the truth and rule of the gospel is supposed.

Secondly. A suitable and, in its own nature, effectual

[1] Verses 10, 11.

preservative against this evil is provided; namely the actual knowing and due considering of the character of him of whom they have been learned. As to the former:—

First. The possibility and danger of forsaking the truth and rule of the gospel. The supposing of such a thing, in the text, might seem to carry an affront to one of Timothy's excellent piety. Him, this apostle calls his own, or legitimate, "son in the faith;"[1] and his "dearly beloved son:"[2] yea (as some learned men with great probability conclude) "the pillar and ground of the truth."[3] For there is no necessity of giving this character, either to a particular church, or even the universal. However that be, it is unquestionable that Timothy was not only a sincere, but a very eminent believer, who had made an uncommon proficiency under the teaching and institution of the apostle Paul; who, thereupon did give him the office of an evangelist, (far more considerable than that of a bishop or even a metropolitan, which hath been assigned to him without ground;) yet, notwithstanding, this exhortation to him carrieth a plain supposition that it was (considering the case abstractly from the Divine purpose) possible, even for him, not to continue in the things which he had learned of such a teacher as the apostle Paul: who therefore judged it necessary to fortify him by this earnest advice and suitable direction. And we shall perceive just reason to extend the supposition unto all who have learned, even of the best instructors, the sacred truths and duties of the gospel, if we reflect on the various causes of departing from them; as,

I. The native vicious inconstancy and instability of human minds. None are by renewing grace made perfect, and delivered from all remaining defects as to the Christian state: if we are not kept and guarded by Divine power, we are in continual danger of departing from the living God. Who would have suspected any mutableness in those Israelites who heard the majestic terrible voice of God

[1] 1 Tim. i. 2. [2] 2 Tim. i. 2. [3] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

promulgating his law on Mount Sinai,—whom some Jewish authors[1] have magnified, as if they had all been advanced above the ministering angels? on which occasion, they most solemnly obliged themselves to "hear, and do all that the Lord their God should speak.[2]" And yet so unstable were their hearts, that they quickly—within less than forty days—"turned aside out of the way, which God had commanded them."[3] Yea, when the Son of God, the great prophet, was raised up and sent to the same people, among whom he was approved of God by the most stupendous miracles, (such as none other had ever wrought), one of which, namely, the multiplying of the loaves by which many thousands were fed, carried such convictive evidence, that the spectators professed, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world;"[4] yet, the very next day, many of these very persons, who were Christ's disciples, "went back and walked no more with him."[5] On this supposition of our vicious instability the apostle grounds the earnest advice, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."[6]

II. The strong delusive workings of remaining unbelief. This root of apostasy is not totally killed and destroyed, even in those who have the spirit of faith. Hence we find the apostle cautioning them whom he styles "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,"[7] to "take heed, lest there be in them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."[8] How apt are we to admit into our minds a suspicion, lest the gospel revelation should be a cunningly devised fable, a mere invention of deceivers, who for their own interest have framed this doctrine; especially when any are observed to pretend a zeal for it, while they deny it in their works, and turn it into an engine of advancing secular power and advantage: like those whom the apostle de-

[1] Pirke R. Elies, c. 47. [2] Deut. v. 27. [3] Ex. xxxii. 8.
[4] John vi. 14. [5] Verse 66. [6] 1 Cor. x. 12.
[7] Heb. iii. 1. [8] Verse 12.

scribeth by this infamous character,[1] counting religion to be an *income*, or gainful business,—as that passage ought to be rendered.

III. The various discouragements which attend a constant belief and practice of the gospel; which the apostle had his eye upon in the immediately preceding context: where he mentioneth the persecutions and afflictions which still followed him in the discharging of his office, and subjoins,[2] "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" by the reviling tongues, or (when God permits) by the oppressive hands of evil men. These lions, in the way of our duty, have terrified many out of it, who have been ashamed or afraid to continue in that course which, though most unjustly, hath the reproachful name of a sect, and is everywhere spoken against.[3] The experience of all places and times informs us how strong and dangerous impressions have been made by the reproach and contempt, the cross and sufferings, which attend the faithful service of Christ: even while the memory of our Redeemer was recent, his blood, as it were, yet warm, and his apostles alive, and shining as lights in the world, there was cause of a sorrowful complaint of this kind: "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned from me."[4] The true reason of this inexcusable deserting may be discovered in the following part of the chapter; namely, they were ashamed of the apostle's chain, they judged it both dishonourable and hazardous to persist in the communion of one who gained nothing among men but disgracing bonds and distressing torments.

IV. The strong impressions made by worldly allurements. There is not a more dangerous enemy to our souls, and which so powerfully dissuadeth from continuing in the things they have learned of the most excellent teachers, than the love of this world: wherever this prevails, it stifleth all the con-

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 5.
[2] 2 Tim. iii. 12.
[3] Acts xxviii. 22.
[4] 2 Tim. i. 15.

victions of reason and conscience, it baffleth the force of all the arguments which demonstrate the Divine original of the gospel and the unspeakable importance of the truths and counsels contained in it. There have been and will be many, to whom the account given of Demas is justly applicable: "Demas hath forsaken me, (and consequently, the things he had learned of me), having loved this present world."[1] And never, I think, was there greater danger from this snare than in the age wherein we live; in which a paganish esteem and admiration of riches and greatness renders all the vast concerns of the other world despicable and without force: it is most amazing that Christians should be so blinded as not to discern, what the pagan Cicero has complained of, '*corrupti mores depravatique sunt admiratione divitiarum.*' The manners of men are corrupted and depraved by the admiring of riches. And,

V. The last cause of this danger is the seduction and enticement of wicked men, which the apostle remarks in the verse immediately preceding: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving," etc. It is a sad reflection, that too many good men seem contented only to save their own souls, without seeking to allure and draw others into the path of life: but evil men set themselves to infect others, and engage them in the same pernicious courses; those who want learning to dispute and reason against truth and holiness, fail not to employ the little wit they have, in ridiculing the most sacred things,—like the scoffers predicted by the apostle Peter; ungodly men, "walking after their own lusts,"[2] who supply the want of argument by profane jests and raillery on the gospel and those who seriously and heartily believe it: to which they often add the enticing baits of liberty, pleasure, and gain, which carry a mighty force, especially with younger persons, whose age makes them unsuspicious and inconsiderate. Hence so many in their youth quite cast off all the bands of

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 10. [2] 2 Peter iii. 3.

a pious education, whilst they *guard* not against the dangerous enticements of sinners, which is earnestly enjoined by the royal preacher,[1] whose notorious defection from the worship of God is assigned unto this cause.[2]

Having thus represented the danger of not continuing in the things which have been learned of those who have instructed us in our holy religion; we proceed, in the

Second place, to consider the preservative against this danger laid down in the latter part of the text, "knowing (or considering) of whom thou hast learned them;" as much as to say, 'I apprehend thou wilt be strongly tempted to desert the doctrine and practice which have been delivered to thee; but if thou duly rememberest my character and conduct, how I have demeaned myself in my whole course, this will be an apt and suitable means to establish thy resolution of adhering to the things thou hast learned of me.' In discoursing on this apostolic prescription, we shall,

I. State the proper efficacy of the preservative in its general nature.

II. Lay down the particular characters of a teacher which most directly contribute unto the preserving from the danger mentioned. The former is necessary to prevent mistake; the latter to engage and animate our holy purpose of continuing in the truth and duty of the gospel. As to—

I. The stating and explaining the proper efficacy of what is prescribed, to preserve us from the danger above related, it will be useful to observe the following particulars:—

1. That this is not to be understood as if the bare authority of any ordinary teacher were a sufficient ground of obligation to continue in the things we have learned of him. This cannot be supposed without a most dangerous altering the very nature of faith, which is always to be built on a divine testimony, as the apostle asserts: "So then faith cometh by hearing, (or testimony,) and hearing by the word of God."[3] We ought not to give this deference to even an angel from

[1] Prov. i. 10. [2] 1 Kings xi. 5, 6. [3] Rom. x. 17.

heaven, much less to the most excellent teachers, that their single authority should oblige us. We are commanded by our Lord, in this sense, "To call no man our father upon the earth;"[1] that is, not to admit any one whomsoever, who acts in his own name, to have a dominion over our faith: only the supreme original truth, the blessed God speaking by his Son and those whom he commissioneth, is absolutely to be relied on. The Bereans are dignified with the title of noble or high-born persons, because when the apostle Paul first preached to them, "They searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."[2] Much more is it our duty to examine all that we learn of our ministers, by the same infallible rule, that we may not be the real disciples of any other master besides him whose name is put on us in our baptism. Our faith and persevering obedience to the gospel must not stand in the wisdom, or authority, of men, but in the power and veracity of God.[3]

2. This is to be understood in subordination to the internal effectual agency of the Divine Spirit, by whom, as the principal efficient, "God doth stablish all believers in Christ,"—as the apostle asserts.[4] The sealing and impressing of our minds and hearts by the heavenly signet is absolutely needful unto our continuing in the things we have learned; all our own efforts and endeavours will never preserve us from defection and drawing back unto perdition, without the powerful working of the Holy Spirit, who alone can fix our wavering minds and furnish with strength to resist and overcome the most dangerous assaults that we can be exposed to. Therefore the apostle, besides this seasonable counsel to Timothy, earnestly prayeth for him,—last verse of this epistle,—"The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit;" as knowing that without the inward vital presence of the Redeemer all other helps will be insufficient and unsuccessful: and we are obliged to add unto our use of the means here prescribed, fervent

[1] Matt. xxiii. 9.
[2] Acts xvii. 11.
[3] 1 Cor. ii. 5.
[4] 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

and continued supplication, for obtaining the mighty aid of the Divine Spirit, whom God hath graciously promised "to give to those who ask him."[1] But,—

3. The efficacy of such a knowing and considering of him of whom we have learned, deriveth, in the usual method of providence, from the native prevalent force of *example*. When the practice of a minister agreeth with his doctrine, this doth strongly recommend and impress the things that are taught by him: whereas a practice that is contrary to the most holy rules and instructions shuts up and bars the hearts of those who observe this disagreement. Hence the blessed God, while he spake by prophets, called none to the prophetic office but holy persons; as we read.[2] And it is well known that where the qualifications of officers in Christian churches are described, the principal stress is laid upon a holy and unblameable life;[3] on this *design*,—that the example of those who teach others might powerfully convey their doctrine into the very hearts and consciences of men. And this consideration gives a sad occasion of observing how great a judgment and tremendous plague, a vicious ungodly ministry is to a people; which usually is much more influenced by the manners of their teachers than by all the arguments and counsels which are proposed by them. One straying guide, who himself leads the way in a course of sin, draws many after him into the same destructive path. This provoked the terrible displeasure of God against the Jewish priests, against whom he draws a most severe charge: "But ye have departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law."[4] Not the greatest learning or moving eloquence, not the most accurate observing of external forms, can compensate for a defect as to holiness of conversation; which leads to the last reflection, namely,

4. That the knowing and considering of the Christian practice of a teacher, is a most apt means to prevent

[1] Luke xi. 13.
[2] Luke i. 70; 2 Pet. i. 21.
[3] 1 Tim. iii.; Tit. i.
[4] Mal. ii. 8.

or remove prejudices against the things which have been learned. Constant experience attests the truth of this. Many have acknowledged that it was their observing the justice and temperance, the patience and humility, of those who suffered as evil-doers, which convinced them of the Divine authority of the Christian doctrine. Therefore the glorious Founder of the Christian church did not only furnish the first publishers of the gospel with the prophetic spirit and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, but replenished them with all the fruits of righteousness and universal goodness. They could make a just and safe appeal to all who had opportunity of observing, in the apostle's language: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."[1] It is a very memorable passage which I have met with in a learned and judicious author:[2] 'If the gospel,' saith he, 'were now to be planted again, all the miracles in the world, I think, would not make it take, while our morals are as they are. A miracle may strike a little wonderment at first, but good morality, (that is, a holy conversation,) it sinks, it soaks to the heart. Perverseness may say a miracle is from the devil; but who can say that good morality is from the devil?' This will be sufficient, I hope, to prevent mistake, concerning the nature and kind of that efficacy which belongs to the means here directed to; I now proceed, in the next place,

II. To lay down the particular characters of a teacher, which most directly recommend and impress the things which have been learned of him; which will bring the discourse to the sorrowful circumstances of our present state: where, as I have before signified, I shall not attempt to draw a full description of him whose decease we justly lament, (which is always a considerable part of a funeral discourse;) but confine myself to some short memorials of him which agree with my present design; which will be of far greater advantage to you, than to hear his just praises set

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 10. [2] Garbutt.

forth by the tongues of men and of angels. This latter could only yield an evanid delight which can no ways contribute to our chief interest,—I mean the salvation of our souls; which, through Divine assistance, will be furthered by the following account of those special characters which are most apt to engage unto a continuing in the things that we have learned. As,—

1. Knowledge in the mystery of Christ, a clear understanding of the counsel of God, that relates to the salvation of lost sinners. Without this, an honest mind may deceive others, because itself is liable to be deceived. This our apostle appeals unto, in the first place, where he makes a description of himself, "Thou hast fully known my *doctrine*,"[1] that is, how consonant to the Scriptures; and puts the Ephesians in mind that he was furnished with this sacred knowledge, by which he was rendered a wise master-builder in the house of God.[2] I shall not flatter your late teacher, when I affirm that God had given him an uncommon skill in the word of righteousness, from whence he always drew all that he taught. He had peculiar advantages for understanding the oracles of God;—a large fund of natural endowments, improved by superadded preparatives unto the study of the Scriptures; a rich treasure of human learning, despised by none but the ignorant; particularly, a thorough knowledge of pagan theology, by which he was enabled to descry the shortness and mistakes of human reason; which faculty he very well understood to use in subordination unto Christian faith, whose mysteries he was able to free from the objections of cavillers.

But that which most of all assisted his searching and right understanding of the Scriptures, was his very early and growing exemplary piety, which hath the promise of Divine teaching and illumination. He took care to wash the vessel, that it might be receptive of Divine communications. To all these he added unwearied diligence, humility, and prayer, which was the delight and solace of his whole life. In such

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 10. [2] Eph. iii. 5.

a course, he was safe from the illusions of fancy and the specious errors that many great wits have been entangled with. His very excellent useful writings are a public testimony of this thing. Most justly might he use the apology made by the Apostle Paul, when he was censured and reproached with being mad: "I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."[1] This wisdom enabled him to confirm the truths of the gospel with proper and most convincing evidence, and represent the Christian scheme in its native unexceptionable comeliness. And should we not continue in the things we have learned of such a scribe, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven?

2. A second character which has a peculiar aptness to recommend and impress divine things, is godly sincerity, with which all the first publishers of the gospel were adorned; and it did most eminently shine in the conduct of the apostle Paul, who takes frequent occasion to mention it, because some, either from ignorance or malice, taxed him with the want of it, as if he had acted according to worldly polities: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youward."[2] And he more largely insists on this qualification of those who have the office of instructing others.[3] I know the imputation of insincerity and hypocrisy hath been very frequent against the most upright excellent servants of God; thus when the accuser could not fasten a charge on the life of holy Job, he taxeth him with a mercenary and insincere disposition of mind: "Doth Job fear God for nought?"[4]

The wise council of God permits these unrighteous[5] and

[1] Acts xxvi. 25.
[2] 2 Cor. i. 12.
[3] 1 Thess. ii. 3—6.
[4] Job i. 9.

[5] F. Paul relateth that Pope Adrian, (one of the honestest of his order,) charged Luther and his followers with hypocrisy, and acting against conscience, in which they were persuaded of the certain truth of the Romish tenets, but dissembled their sentiments; *in sua conscientia tenessero per*

very uneasy accusations, to exercise and demonstrate the reality and truth of his servants' love and devotedness to him,—of which your deceased pastor gave most convictive evidences throughout the whole course of his ministry, by a noble and generous contemning of the world and secular advantages, and a steady aiming at the honour of God, in all his conduct and ministrations; so that the character given of a learned and excellent defender[1] of the Protestant cause doth truly belong to him; namely, Many excellencies there were in him, for which his memory remains; but above all was his crown, that he unfeignedly sought God's glory, and the good of men's souls. And nothing doth so strongly recommend the things that we have learned, as an assurance of the holy sincerity of the teacher, who can have no design to corrupt the word of God for the sake of the greatest worldly advantage: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."[2] We have known few in our age to whom this solemn protestation of the apostle is more truly applicable than to him of whom you have learned; and what can justify the not continuing in the things taught by him?

3. A third character which directly contributes to this purpose, is an ardent affection unto them who are taught. Nothing doth so certainly open and captivate the hearts of men as love, when it is apprehended. Very eminent were the apostle Paul and his fellow-labourers for this disposition; "Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, (that is, lives,) because ye were dear unto us."[3] Nothing could rise higher than what we read: "For I could wish that myself were accursed for my brethren;"[4] where it is

ndubitate l' opinioni Romane, fingendo altrimente: E però essere cosa facillima estinguere quella dottrina, che non era fondata, salvo che sopra gl' interessi. Istoria del Concilio de Trento, L. I. That Pope hath not been singular in his censure, than which nothing could be more unjust.

[1] Chillingworth.
[2] 2 Cor. ii. 17.
[3] 1 Thess. ii. 8.
[4] Rom. ix. 3.

not to be supposed that the apostle, a most sincere and fervent lover of Christ, could intend an eternal separation from Christ,—which is all one with damnation,—but he only meant a bodily destruction for the sake of Christ, such as they suffered who were accursed or devoted unto death.[1] I can truly profess, that I have not known any one who hath so nearly resembled this pattern as he whom we lament. How naturally, and with inward solicitude, did he care for your estate! How oft hath he ministered in this place, when his infirmities made such a service hazardous to his life,—which he did not count dear to himself, that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received for the saving of souls; for which he had the most tender regard, to the disregarding of all other and lower interests! We may justly apply to him, the account given by this apostle of Epaphroditus: "For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life."[2] I might mention various instances of this most tender and fervent love to souls,—as his impartial and faithful reproving of sin, without respect of persons; his easiness of access, his condescending to the lowest, and indeed becoming all things to all, that he might gain the more; but I must not omit that bright evidence of his divine love to men,—I mean his readiness to assist all the necessitous and distressed that he had opportunity of doing good unto: very few have been so governed as he, by the apothegm of our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."[3] His charity was not a narrow spring, limited and confined to a small spot, but, like an ocean, sent forth refreshing streams without distinction. How oft have the bowels of our persecuted brethren in a neighbouring kingdom, those generous confessors of the faith, been refreshed by his concern for them! When it is the reproachful character of our age that all seek their own things, are intent on building their own houses, and raising their families, he was intent on building up living temples unto God, in all the ways which might

[1] Lev. xxvii. 29; Numb. xxi. 2, 3. [2] Phil. ii. 30.
[3] Acts xx. 35.

contribute to the present and everlasting happiness of men. In this course he not only laid up for himself an undecaying treasure in heaven, but used the best method to entail a Divine blessing on all his offspring. Surely the instructions, the counsels and exhortations, of such a one ought never to be forgot or slighted, when they could proceed from no other principle than a most unfeigned love to God, and affection to those among whom he laboured.

4. A fourth recommending character of a minister of the gospel, is Christian patience under afflictions and sufferings. When any suffer death for the truth of Christ, they gain the glorious titles of martyrs or witnesses of Christ, whose doctrine they seal with their blood. The Divine providence hath taken care that the Christian faith should not want this evidence, both at its first planting, and at the time when it was rescued from Antichristian corruptions. The apostle in the preceding context lays a great stress on this thing: "Thou hast fully known my long-suffering, patience—persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me—what persecutions I endured;"[1] that is, *I* was not a mere compelled patient, but underwent them with becoming submission and fortitude. Indeed, God was not pleased to call forth his servant lately withdrawn from us, unto the fiery trial; but he was furnished with patience and fortitude of mind, able to encounter the most grievous sufferings. It is reasonable to conclude, that the afflicting hand of God did so long and variously chasten him, not so much for his own profit, as that he might be an eminent example of a truly Christian patience under very sharp afflictions. All the violent pains he endured, all the tedious hours he passed in his former and last sickness, did not draw one impatient expression from him; but even then his adoring praises of God did instruct and confirm others. This was a seal which he affixed to the doctrine taught by him, which therefore we ought to continue in.

5. A fifth and last character which strongly recommends

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11.

the things which have been taught, is a final joyful perseverance in the Christian course; it was on this design that the apostle giveth this account of himself: "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith."[1] The very same language did agree to your excellent pastor. If he had fainted, or retracted at last, this must have much weakened the force of the things he taught and your obligation to continue in them: but the Divine grace enabled him to finish his course with uncommon joy. As he had always exercised an inviolable reverence for his own conscience, whose purity and peace he preferred above the most tempting advantages, so few ever more experienced a Divine peace and serenity of mind at the nearest approaches of death: the sentence of it, when he received it in himself, did not dismay him; he needed no consolations from men, but as aged holy Simeon,[2] only leave from his Lord to depart, and be admitted into His immediate presence, who hath now openly approved this good and faithful servant, and caused him to enter into His own joy.

Let us now, in the fear of God, lay these considerations to heart; that such excellent labours as we have enjoyed, may not be lost or turn into accusing witnesses against us another day. Our continuing in the things we have learned of him will be the best improvement of our unspeakable loss, and hereby shall we show the truest respect to his memory; that he may not only live in his offspring and useful writings, but in the truly Christian conversation of those who were related to him or had opportunity of learning of him.

In order to which, I shall subjoin a few persuasive considerations. As,

i. It ought to have great weight in your minds, that the things you learned of him are the most important and uncontroverted truths of the gospel: he did not entertain you with doubtful disputations or debates concerning external forms and modes of religion. His great soul could not descend to

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7. [2] Luke ii. 29.

these little things. He hath expressed himself fully on this subject, in the dedication of 'Delighting in God,' and preface to the 'Carnality of Religious Contention;' which latter breathes so heavenly a charity and concern for the truly Christian interest, that a very eminent divine of the Established Church did profess a willingness to lay down his own life, if such a state of things as is there described might obtain among Christians. God is witness, and you, with many others also, that his public ministrations were wholly taken up in opening and applying the principles of the oracles of God, (which he did with inimitable clearness and judiciousness,) and in describing and pressing the unquestionable duties of men and Christians,—such as love to God and our neighbour, repentance, faith, Christian vigilance, prayer, humility, and holy fear, with which our salvation is to be wrought out; still inculcating the absolute necessity of Christ's mediation, and the renewing, assisting influence of the Holy Spirit, which he showed to be consistent with, yea, obligatory unto our earnest endeavours after conversion and eternal life,—which last he largely pressed in many discourses on Rom. ii. 7. Very frequently he cautioned against those three dangerous rocks, that prove fatal to many souls, namely, a sensual life, formality in religion, and unfruitfulness in the Christian profession. And is there any of all these, which you ought to be ashamed or unwilling to continue in? Can the reason or judgment of men frame a just objection against such a course? Nay, will not that man stand self-condemned, who, having once learned such important, undoubted truths, departs from them through any temptations whatsoever? Add to this, in the next place,

ii. The convincing demonstration he produced to satisfy reason and conscience. He was an avowed enemy to a blind implicit faith, as also to a blind devotion. And none had a better skill to set in the best light, the rational evidences which confirm the principles and duties both of natural and revealed religion, of which his published writings are a convincing witness: and his ordinary discourses, though

clothed with familiar language, were not inferior as to strength of reasoning: so that it could not be charged on him, that he preached to the fancy or only aimed to move the affections,—for he always first addressed to the judgment and conscience; so that if the gospel which was taught by him, remains hid to any who attended his ministry, "it is hid to those who are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not;" because "by manifestation of the truth he commended (or approved) himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God;" as the apostle speaks of himself, and his fellow-labourers.[1] Again;

iii. Reflect on the very manner of his teaching, how earnest, how moving, how pungent, how persuasive was his language and expression! It might plainly be discerned that he spake from his very heart; not as pleasing the ear or imagination, (which his rare wit and eloquence enabled him to do,) but as seeking the eternal happiness of souls. What is said concerning the famed tract of a stoic philosopher,[2] that it was so moving and operative, that if any were not wrought on, he could only be reformed by the tribunals of the other world, (the author speaks according to the Platonic hypothesis,[3]) is applicable in this case. It may almost be despaired, that those who refused and rejected the messages brought by him, but retained hard and obdurate hearts, should be persuaded to repentance and holiness by any other ministry.

iv. It ought further to be considered, that the things learned of him, were a most precious trust or *depositum* committed to those who have learned them. The original term ἐπιστώθης, which is translated, "hast been assured," in some Greek copies, by a small variation, is changed into a verb that signifieth to commit or entrust[4]; and this reading hath been preferred by some translations. This cannot be questioned, that Divine

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 2—4.
[2] Epictetus.
[3] Simplicius.
[4] ἐπιστεύθης 22. V. Latin, French.

truths and instructions have the character of a sacred trust, which is to be preserved with utmost care and fidelity. The very light of nature, the dictates of reason, discover this obligation: so that all agree in condemning the base injustice of him, who betrays a trust, and is negligent in preserving that which is deposited with him; and the crime is judged the more heinous and inexcusable, by how much the *depositum*, the thing committed to another, is more precious and valuable. Who, but a blinded infidel, will deny the incomparable value of sacred and Divine truths, which are of a heavenly original, and are a principal treasure committed to the church? How solemn a charge was given to Timothy! "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust."[1] And it is repeated, "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep;"[2] as much as to say, Give all diligence to guard the excellent *depositum* of the gospel, which thou hast been entrusted with. The same obligation is laid on us who learned the same gospel;—which must deserve a far more solicitous concern than any of the precious and admired treasures of this earth, which are guarded with greatest care. But if we continue not in the things we have learned, we are guilty of the worst injustice and unfaithfulness to others, and of greatest unkindness to ourselves; for the things we have learned are not made our propriety, to do with them as we please; but we are obliged to transmit them to others of the succeeding age, that they who rise up after us may enjoy the same blessed advantage.[3] How great is the crime of a parent, who having received a fair patrimony or honour, doth waste the estate and forfeit the honour, which he ought to transmit to those who are to succeed him! If those of this generation should betray the civil rights and liberties of the nation, which have been transmitted by their ancestors, and entail poverty and slavery on the succeeding generations; how unpardonable would such a conduct be judged! But the depriving of posterity of the light and efficacy of gospel

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 20. [2] 2 Tim. i. 14. [3] Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6.

truth, is an injury, an injustice, unspeakably greater: because the former only affects the temporal and lesser interests of men, but the latter endangers their souls and eternal felicity: and who would not tremble at the thought of such guilt, if he really believes and expects a future judgment, in which a severe account must be given of this sacred talent that hath been entrusted with him? What answer shall *he* give in the day of accounts, who was very solicitous and diligent to guard every other trust,—to transmit with great fidelity, houses, lands, trade, and such low matters,—but was unfaithful to his principal charge; and, as much as lay in him—by not continuing in the things himself had learned—suffered the gospel to fail and be lost out of this world? In the last place,

v. Without continuing in the things you have learned of your deceased pastor, you cannot come where he now is. The present separation is matter of just sorrow, that we shall see his face on earth no more: but what must an everlasting separation be! To behold him shining as the sun in the kingdom of his Father, and yourselves cast into outer darkness; to see him crowned with never-fading life and glory, and yourselves shut up in the place of torment; what heart can bear the very thought? But nothing is more unquestionable, than that there is but one passage, one path to heaven; where he had never come, if he had not continued himself in the things which he first learned and afterwards taught. Nay, if you should depart from the holy truth and duty in which you have been instructed by him; notwithstanding the tender love he bore to you, he must stand forth as a witness and accuser, to aggravate your guilt and greaten your condemnation. I shall conclude with the advice of the apostle, to his dearly beloved Philippians, applied to the present subject: "Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in him, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."[1]

[1] Phil. iv. 9.

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